Book No.
B D6320 1905

Accession
112667

SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY
VITA SINE LITERIS MORS EST

Form 16 20M-5-27

SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 1223 00350 2953

SEE DATE WHEN

Aug 18 '32

Sep

Oct 4

A 20

May 4

Form 11—200

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/lordbeaconsfield0000unse_h6x5

LORD BEACONSFIELD

7

A BIOGRAPHY

BY

T. P. O'CONNOR, M.P.

EIGHTH EDITION

LONDON
T. FISHER UNWIN
PATERNOSTER SQUARE
MCMV

B
H
6320
112667 1905

3 1223 00350 2953

All Rights Reserved

PREFACE.

SOME time ago, I published the first volume of a Biography of Lord Beaconsfield, intending to add a second volume of the same length and on the same plan. It has been represented to me that a different arrangement would be more suitable. I have received many assurances of the value of my work from competent authorities; and its reception in the Press was far more gratifying than I ventured to expect. It was highly praised by many journals, which, perhaps, may be accepted as proof that it possessed some merit; it was attacked by others with a violence which, perhaps, as clearly proved that it had some force. But the plan I adopted in writing it was calculated, I now believe, to make the work valuable to the politician and the journalist, rather than popular with the general public. Instead, therefore, of adhering to my original intention, I accepted the representations made to me, and set about producing a new work on a new plan. I determined to give,

as before, copious quotations from the speeches and writings of Lord Beaconsfield, so as to afford the reader material for accepting or rejecting my conclusions; but I resolved that those quotations should for the most part be placed in foot-notes, instead of being embodied in the text. In that way I hoped to avoid interruption of the narrative; and to consult that liberty of choice which every reader demands in these days—the liberty to read or to skip as he may please. It was also part of my plan to omit everything that did not have important bearing on my subject. Another way in which I determined to make my new work different from the old one was in the arrangement of the incidents. Acting on those ideas, I have now written a book which, except in the general tendency of opinion, is almost completely different from my first. My first work consisted of 746 pages, and brought the life of Lord Beaconsfield down to the fall of Peel in 1846; the present work, carrying the narrative down to the entry of the Prime Minister and Lord Salisbury into London, after the conclusion of the Berlin Treaty, contains just 675 pages. This second book, retracing all the ground in my first, and dealing with thirty-two years of Lord Beaconsfield's life besides, contains 70 pages less than the first.

I regret having had to enter into these purely personal details, but they are made necessary by many circumstances.

I have again to acknowledge the assistance I have received from previous writers on the same subject. I may mention the Biography of Lord Beaconsfield attributed to Mr. Macknight; the Life by Mr. MacGilchrist, published by Messrs. Cassell and Co.; the Life by the late Mr. G. H. Francis; and the short sketch in Mr. Jeafferson's "Novels and Novelists." I have likewise derived much assistance from two able pamphlets by Mr. Sedley Taylor, the one on the Reform Bill of 1867, the other on the Eastern question; and a series of brilliant Essays in the *Fortnightly Review*, under the title, "The Political Adventures of Lord Beaconsfield," have also given me many valuable suggestions. But the assistance I have received from books is small compared with that I have received from friends, who have helped me in collecting materials in my laborious task. Without the aid of Mr. Carey Taylor, Mr. D. MacSweeney, and my brother, Mr. John O'Connor, I should not have been able to finish my work within even the considerable period it has already occupied me.

One word, finally, as to the views expressed. I claim to have advanced no opinion, which has not

been tested by patient investigation of facts, and by candid consideration. At least, I can say that I have made no statement for which I do not give authority; that I have pronounced no judgment without supplying the facts by which it can be tested; and that I have endeavoured to convince the reader of nothing of which I have not convinced myself.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THIS is a reprint of the first edition. The pressure of the public demand for a new edition, and other circumstances, have prevented me making some corrections which I had intended introducing. Those corrections would have been, in most cases, of an almost typographical character. Here and there, for instance—as happens in even the most carefully revised work—a misspelled proper name, or a misplaced accent in a foreign word, called for change. Such trivial errors may be the more readily excused in face of the fact that, though the book has been necessarily and properly subjected to severe scrutiny, no misstatement or inaccuracy of any importance has been pointed out. This affords a reasonable ground for satisfaction to the author of a work which deals with all the prominent events of public life in England for a period of nearly fifty years. Objection, it is true, has been made to a few of my statements in reference to subsidiary matters. Dr. B. A. Kennedy regards my references in pp. 190–193 to the part he played in the Shrewsbury election of 1841 as "false,"

"libellous," and "scandalous." On examining, however, the reasons by which Dr. Kennedy endeavoured to justify such harsh epithets, I found that his own admissions afforded additional proof of the general accuracy of my representation of his conduct. He showed, on the other hand, that I had erred in two or three minor matters of detail. He did not invite Mr. Disraeli to the speech-day; Mr. Disraeli came of his own accord. He is not a "staunch Tory," but a "Constitutional Whig," though in 1841 he was a supporter of Sir Robert Peel. And he did not—as the *Shrewsbury Chronicle* stated—oppose the emancipation of the Jews. Those errors I gladly correct. A relative of Rogers the poet has written me a courteous letter, throwing doubt on the report that the poet stood godfather to young Disraeli when he was baptized. He also thinks that some of my casual references to Rogers give an unduly unfavourable view of the character of his celebrated relative. This is possible: all my statements with regard to Rogers are necessarily second-hand.

INTRODUCTION

TO A NEW (THE SIXTH) EDITION.

London presented a curious spectacle on Saturday, April 19th, 1884. The Primrose League, established amid jeers, by fussy nobodies, and with titles that had been banished from real life to the regions of Opéra Bouffe, had proclaimed a demonstration in memory of Lord Beaconsfield, and had suggested that on this day—the third anniversary of his death—his admirers should wear the primrose, his favourite flower. The idea had been taken up with a fervour that must have astonished even the most hopeful Knight or Dame of the New Order. In some parts of the town the primrose was worn by at least one of every two persons one met; and it was still more remarkable that it was worn by people of all classes. The thin and pale city clerk, hurrying home to his tea, the sempstress or milliner coming from the heated work-room, sometimes even the sullen artizan, bore the ruling flower as ostentatiously as the retired officer,

the merchant, or the male or female occupants of carriages. At night the primrose was to be seen in the gallery and pit as often as in the stalls and boxes of the theatres; an actress at an East End theatre, wholly frequented by the working classes, coming on the stage with a bunch of primroses attached to her girdle, was pelted with nosegays from every part of the delighted house. In short, the testimony of London to the dead Minister was sincere, enthusiastic, universal.

It is rarely that a statesman is in any country so honoured at a period so soon after his death. There is no time when an active and vivid personal force in politics is so completely forgotten as in the years which succeed to the first outburst of emotion after his disappearance. Time passes, and he takes his place among the immortalities of the country; the interest that had ceased in the political man revives in the historic figure, and hot praise or venomous hate again asserts its place. But before that time has come, there is an interval when the name is rarely mentioned: the politician, departed but a few years back, is more spectral than the Minister whose grave was dug a century before.

The celebration of the third anniversary of Lord Beaconsfield's death was then in every way pheno

menal. How is it to be accounted for? The main causes are the mistakes of the men who replaced him in office; the littleness of the men who have taken his place in his own party. Above all, Lord Beaconsfield has the same advantage which, according to M. Ranc, Gambetta had over all other competitors for French favour,—he has a legend. Whatever else his life wanted, it was full of picturesqueness. A foreigner, the child of an outcast and despised race, of comparatively poor parents, and a member of the still unconsidered profession of literature, he reached the proudest position in the Empire, after a life of fierce struggle, of many and disastrous defeats, through a whole series of break-neck escapes from disastrous ruin. And then his latest years had a legend all of their own. Not one out of every hundred of the men and women who wore primroses on April 19th could give a lucid account of the real points at issue between Mr. Gladstone and Lord Beaconsfield in their prolonged controversy over the Eastern question. But there was a vague feeling in the minds of the people that Lord Beaconsfield had spoken up for England with courage and a bold front; that he had made England look big once more in the eyes of the world; that the British lion had again showed with its old spirit that it could not

be interfered with; and all the other vague and loose ideas that make up the creed of Conservative Jingoism: and Jingoism is still the gospel of the overwhelming majority of the English people of all classes, of the humble as much as, if not more than, of the better educated, more impartial, and more cosmopolitan aristocracy. Indeed, the tribute to the memory of Lord Beaconsfield is one more proof of the thoroughness with which he had mastered the character of the English people; and to the political student will serve to confirm the conviction that Lord Beaconsfield had the detachment of mind from the passions and convictions of the people over whom he ruled that supplies the secret of his political success and confirms the impression of his moral worthlessness.

It is not unnatural that, in considering a career like that of Lord Beaconsfield, the writer should seek his type in the creations of romance. There are many who will instinctively think of him and "Tito Melema;" and perhaps the great author of "Romola," when she drew the portrait of the adventurous Greek, was not unconscious of the resemblance between the creation of her pen and the successful Hebrew who in her own time had attained such mastery over a Christian and a Western people. I think a better

analogy is the "Spendius" of "Salammbô." There is a strange scene between "Spendius," the Greek slave, and "Mathô," the general of the Carthaginian mercenaries, that always bears, to my mind, a resemblance to many of the episodes in the career of Lord Beaconsfield. The Greek slave is found in his tent, beaten in battle, broken in spirits and cowed; but in the midst of his disasters he rises up and recalls to the scornful barbarian the exploits which the cunning of his tongue and the dauntlessness of his irreverence had worked;—how he had turned the wrath of the mercenaries against Carthage; how he had baffled all the efforts to appease them; how he had penetrated at night into the temple and stolen without fear the sacred veil of the gods, the sight of which shook the stoutest heart. And the barbarian, hearing the story, stands aghast before this man, "at once so cowardly and so terrible."

To some extent it was the same with Lord Beaconsfield. He was potent and terrible because he revered nothing, he respected nothing; because the sacred things in the temples of the people he ruled were to him idols and nothing more. In one sense, then, Lord Beaconsfield was not wholly wrong in the claim he makes for himself in that wonderful piece of self-revelation—his first novel. "There wasnt

but one thing more," exclaims "Vivian Grey" in his communings on his chances of future greatness, "courage, pure, perfect courage; and does Vivian Grey know fear? He laughed an answer of bitterest derision."

It was his courage which helped him throughout all his difficult and perilous enterprises; but it may be doubted whether it was what most men would call "pure, perfect courage." The courage was the resultant of two forces,—of the lack of all reverence to which I have just alluded; and of inflexible self-confidence, of unquestioning self-worship.

And on this latter point I invite the reader to again follow me for enlightenment to the pages of "Vivian Grey." "Shrined," says "Mrs. Felix Lorraine," in that immortal walk by moonlight with "Vivian Grey,"—"shrined in the secret chamber of your soul there is an image before which you bow down in admiration, and that image is YOURSELF."

To anybody who studies closely the secrets of political success, the inference will be inevitable that self-complacency is almost the greatest of political talents, the most potent weapon of the political combatant. The doubts, the self-questionings of men of diffident nature handicap them in the race with competitors of unruffled self-confidence. Thus, in the

long and interesting conflict between Lord Beaconsfield and the present Lord Derby, all the advantages at first sight were in favour of the younger man. He is the descendant of a long line of wealthy peers who hold places in the history and in the sublimest literature of the country; his opponent was the son of a Hebrew *littérateur*. Lord Derby had the reputation of having a character essentially English in its good sense and its unimaginativeness; his rival had histrionic tricks worthy of an Eastern showman and perilous flashes of a romancer's imagination. Lord Derby was comparatively young; his opponent stood on the brink of the grave. To mark the largeness of the odds in Lord Derby's favour, one has only to recall the statements that were commonly made when the election of 1874 gave the Conservatives their unexpected and overwhelming victory. Everybody was then saying that it was Lord Derby and not Lord Beaconsfield whom the country was calling to the leadership of the party and the rule of the country; and Lord Derby had himself, at a public dinner immediately after the election, to protest against the attempt to run him in competition with his old chief —a protest that at the time was supposed to display great generosity of character. Within four years of that time, Lord Derby had been driven out in humilia-

tion from the Cabinet of Lord Beaconsfield; and a little later the man put in competition with Lord Beaconsfield for the Premiership was a subordinate member of a Liberal Cabinet, distanced hopelessly and for ever in the race for first political place.

We do not yet know the inner history of the struggle between the two men; but one thing may be confidently asserted, that the issue was due largely to the difference in temperament as well as in opinion between the rivals. The somewhat commonplace Englishman, with notions of duty to his country, a horror of bloodshed, the fears of an avenging conscience, had no chance in times of perilous and fateful resolves against the brilliant, callous, self-adoring Oriental. It would be bad taste to enter into a comparison of the courage of a man still living with that of a man dead; but assuredly few would find it easy to believe that there was a greater want of purely physical courage in the robust and massive frame of the Englishman than in the thin, light, though lithe frame of the Oriental. The courage in which they differed was not physical courage, any more than "Mathô," the barbarian warrior, was less bold than the Greek slave he despised. Lord Beaconsfield's superiority was in the want of the cowardice that comes from scruple and self-doubt.

It is one of the fictions by which Lord Salisbury has sought to justify the difference of his attitude towards Lord Beaconsfield in his earlier and in his latest days that Lord Beaconsfield sustained a great change in his old age. Whatever might have been the faults and offences of his youth, at least he came to esteem above all things the glory of his country when he was Premier for the last time: such is the apologia of Lord Salisbury for his acceptance with such servile humility of the position of Lord Beaconsfield's subordinate and tool. The defence is utterly untenable. It is hard for any one—except a member of the Salvation Army—to believe in sudden transformations of character in any man; but most difficult in the case of Lord Beaconsfield. The career is singularly inconsistent in its defence and attack of principles; and no politician ever made less scruple of preaching the most opposite doctrines to suit his political exigencies; but yet on most of his innermost convictions he never really changed. And his character above all things was set in a singular rigidity of line. The purposes of his maturity were the avowed purposes of his early boyhood; the means employed were practically the same; the pursuit of the purpose never varied and never flagged. Soft as wax Lord Beaconsfield certainly was, so far as regarded the adoption of

the strategies, the cries, the passions, the faiths of other men whom he wanted to use; but he himself—in his own individual and inner nature—was as unimpressible as granite. It is impossible to think of any great change of purpose or character in a man of such a nature.

It may be that he had convinced himself that the policy he adopted in the Eastern struggle was that best calculated to advance the interests of England; and though his feeling for this country was—like his feeling for the aristocracy—a curious mixture of the scorn of the supreme and foreign egotist and the servility of the self-seeking and mean adventurer; yet he probably felt the interest in the nation's welfare of the master in his servant. But it would require an entire perversion of the palpable lessons of his whole career, and of any careful and impartial study of his character, to assume that any consideration for England, or for anything else in the world but himself, was the guiding motive of his policy. To himself he was the centre of the universe, around which everything else was bound to revolve. That conception of his place in this world is to be found in all his literary works, in all his political conduct; it was equally to be seen in all the small habits of the man. There never was a

face that had a look of more complete self-consciousness. The historic pose in the House of Commons was one of the most extraordinary instances in history of an actor that never took off his wig or rouge or robes. It required a nature that could lie buried in reverential contemplation of self and of what the world thought of him, to bear for so many long hours every day, during a parliamentary career of forty-four years, the strain of a face set in sphinx-like impassiveness and a figure of rigid immobility.

What, then, was the secret of Lord Beaconsfield's attitude on the Eastern Question? Not, assuredly, the enthusiasm for the glory of England which commends itself to the unsophisticated and the proverbially charitable imagination of Lord Salisbury. No; it was the desire to cut a big figure, to feel himself one of the levers that could move the mightiest and the most terrible forces of the world, that could send hundreds of thousands of other men into the dread shock of arms and bring into a collision the vastest countries of the world. And in contemplating such a prospect, with ecstasy undisturbed by a single tremor of self-reproach, Lord Beaconsfield had his advantage over Lord Derby. Self-adoration makes a man strong in face of tragic and awful possibilities. The supreme egotist is as

incapable of the hesitations of ordinary conscience as a tiger of being taught the Christian doctrine of the sacredness of human life. Lord Beaconsfield belonged to the race of supreme egotists. They are happily rare in human life.

Another favourite statement with regard to Lord Beaconsfield, and with his enemies no less than his friends, is that he was a self-mocker. This is a complete misapprehension of the entire character of the man. He always took himself seriously. The fulsome flattery of the world he regarded as but his due; he contemplated himself always as a great natural portent. He may have laughed at everything else in the world; he never laughed at himself.

This book was written in the midst of a great and exciting political struggle; and in the estimate of the issues of a controversial and tempestuous time, there are doubtless many traces of the heat and injustice of eager partisanship. The author, since he produced the work, has had some experience of active political life; and though he is not ready to form a more favourable estimate of Lord Beaconsfield, he might, perhaps, be not disinclined to accept less favourable views of some of his antagonists. To enter into an explanation of any modification which

the views of the writer may have undergone on those points, would take him outside his purpose. The book is intended to be mainly a biography, a study of a great historic character. And the writer is as convinced now as when he wrote it, that, as a study of character, it will be ultimately adopted as an accurate analysis of Lord Beaconsfield's nature and purposes.

It remains only now to complete rapidly the sketch of Lord Beaconsfield's career from the period to which it is brought in the text. He is taken leave of there at the triumphant moment when, to a multitude of wildly enthusiastic admirers, he declared that he had brought back "peace with honour" from the Berlin Conference.

The general impression is that Lord Beaconsfield was anxious to have the appeal to the constituencies at that period. Certainly he never, throughout the whole course of his political career, stood nearly so high in the confidence of the country. Honours poured in upon him : he was entertained at a banquet at Knightsbridge by an assembly of the highest in rank of his party, including many who had held aloof from him for years in distrust of his character or contempt of his origin ; he received the freedom

of the City amid every mark of popular favour; he was ordered to Osborne to take from the hands of the Queen the exalted Order of the Garter. The extent of his power and popularity was to be seen in the fact that the spirit of exultant egotism,—which, having found such free and childish expression in his youth, had been carefully restrained in maturity,—once more broke forth; and he assailed Mr. Gladstone, his chief opponent, with ferocity, and even with insolence. There can be little doubt that if his advice had been followed, and if the general election had then taken place, he would have received a new lease of power. But the great moment was allowed to pass; and shortly after this period of dazzling triumph, difficulties and embarrassments began to dog his path.

The first of these came from India. The government was represented there by the son of one of Lord Beaconsfield's oldest personal and political friends,—the present Lord Lytton. The evidence has since been produced which proves that when Lord Lytton was sent to India, it was to carry out a part of that programme of spirited policy with which Lord Beaconsfield had determined to signalize his second Premiership. The fruits of this scheme soon began to show themselves, and the country, before it knew

well where it was, found itself committed to a tedious, costly, and perilous war with Afghanistan. The war was fought with varying fortunes and with many episodes of tragedy and some of humiliation. The Viceroy of India sent an embassy to the entrance into Afghanistan to pave the way for the establishment of English influence and the admission of an English representative at Cabul. The mission was turned back with circumstances which were exaggerated at the time into deliberate and gross insult. An ultimatum was then despatched to Shere Ali, and in the same way the reply received was represented as couched in very insulting language. When the text was published, the letter was found, as the *Spectator* put it, to be "a whine, not an insult." War was declared, and the English troops succeeded easily in driving into exile Shere Ali, the then ruler of the country, and in making their way to Cabul. In May 1879, a treaty was made at Gandamak—a town between Jellalabad and Cabul—between Yakoob Khan, who had succeeded Shere Ali, his father, the stout old warrior not having survived the ruin of his kingdom, and it was agreed that an English envoy should be received at Cabul. Sir Louis Cavagnari, an Irish officer who had taken a distinguished part in these transactions, was selected as the representative of

England ; and everybody thought that their complete triumph had fully justified the policy of the Government. The congratulations had scarcely been uttered when the worst prophecies of the opponents of the Afghan policy of the Cabinet were realized. There was a popular rising in Cabul, and Sir Louis Cavagnari and his companions were massacred. This compelled the Government to enter on a new campaign ; and on Christmas Eve of 1879 the British troops once more entered Cabul.

In the midst of these disturbing events there had come the news that war had broken out in another part of the empire. The responsibility for this new embarrassment belonged to Sir Bartle Frere ; but it was the spirit of violence and adventure of the Government at home which had stimulated the excesses of their representatives in Africa. This war came at a time when the public mind was already alarmed at the magnitude of the enterprises into which it had been drawn ; and the causes which were put forward in its justification, were generally held to be flimsy and disproportionate. The prickings of conscience were stimulated by the news that a disaster had happened to the British arms terrible in its completeness. The condemnation of the Ministry became strong, and the public mind was still further en-

lightened as to what a spirited foreign policy meant by the state of the national finances. Attempts were made to hide from the public, as much as possible, the full cost of the policy which it had applauded with such lightness of heart. Sir Stafford Northcote, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, instead of following the good old plan of paying the cost of the various enterprises of the Government immediately, spread the payment over several years. But these tactics did not wholly succeed. The disturbance in the finances of the country from these costly enterprises was aggravated by the bad state of trade and the unbroken series of agricultural depression. "I am," said Lord Beaconsfield, talking over the causes of his fall to Lord Ronald Gower ("Reminiscences," ii. 354-5), "the unluckiest of mortals ; six bad harvests in succession, one worse than the former,—this has been the cause of my overthrow ; like Napoleon, I have been beaten by the elements." He did not add that he had helped the destructive effects of the elements by the insecurity which his bellicose policy induced and the vast taxation which his enterprises necessitated. Finally, the Government was discredited by the state of things in Parliament. Under the feeble lead of Sir Stafford Northcote, and through the vigorous and merciless tactics of Mr. Parnell and Mr. Biggar, the Ministry

had lost all control over that assembly; and its prestige there was further prejudiced by the incessant attacks of an energetic, passionate, and able Opposition.

Such was the state of things when the year 1880 opened. There had as yet been given no hint that the Government intended to dissolve Parliament. The fact was over and over again repeated that the Parliament had still, according to law, a full year to run; and the session began in the ordinary way. The long-expected and oft-delayed moment was, however, near at hand, and was hastened by a victory and a disaster. The victory was the success of Mr. Clarke for Southwark following on a victory at Liverpool; the disaster was the Water Bill introduced by Mr. (now Sir) Richard Cross. This measure proposed the purchase of the rights of the Water Companies on terms monstrously and ridiculously high; and it had scarcely been introduced when everybody confessed that its defeat was foredoomed. The dissolution could no longer be delayed.

Lord Beaconsfield was at this moment confronted by the difficulty which he had so often ridiculed in the *déshabille* of literature—the want of a good cry. The hour had passed when a spirited foreign policy could excite the popular imagination, for the dream had been translated into the hideous reality of bloodshed, huge

expenditure, perilous and wide-spreading enterprises. And on the other hand there was no principle of domestic reform to which the leader of a Conservative Administration could appeal. Here, indeed, was a difficulty for a statesman who had made the gratification of the passions of a nation the guiding principle of his policy. But though the passion of blood and hate could no longer take the shape of appeals against great and strong powers, it might be still roused against the weak and the helpless. The love of conquest abroad had to give place to the correlative love of masterfulness at home ; for the traditional hatred of Russia had to be substituted the ever latent hatred of the smaller and weaker dependency. Lord Beaconsfield resolved to appeal to the constituencies on an anti-Irish cry.

A policy like this—wicked beyond description at any time—was especially so at the moment when Lord Beaconsfield adopted it. For, as everybody now knows,—the matter has passed out of the stage of controverted into that of admitted historical facts,—Ireland at that moment stood face to face with one of the famines that have been Nature's periodic Nemesis for a system of land tenure that permitted the lord of the soil to constantly keep the tiller at the lowest point above actual starvation. The potato crop, which

had been bad for the years 1877 and 1878, had in 1879 fallen to a point which represented the destruction of at least two-thirds of the entire crop. Three bad potato crops in succession meant in Ireland—at least, as she then was—wholesale destitution and sporadic famine. The most prominent leaders of the Irish people had attempted in vain to bring this state of things home to the minds of the Legislature ; and, baffled by the steady refusal to attend to the crying and terrible evils that gathered over their country, or exasperated by remedies mean and insufficient, had resorted to tactics which had exasperated public opinion in England against them. Mr. Parnell, too, had in Ireland finally given in his adhesion to a movement which called upon the people to strive for radical change in their condition ; and had advised them in the mean time, instead of lying down to die, as did their fathers in the famine of 1846, to withhold in the present famine as much of the rent from the landlords as would enable them to keep themselves and their families from the graves of the starved. This movement had, of course, been misrepresented in England. The press of London filled their columns with denunciations of Mr. Parnell as preaching public plunder ; and in Parliament, Mr. James Lowther, then the Chief Secretary for Ireland, grinned through a horse-

collar while this national tragedy was slowly unfolding its dread succession of scenes. With Ireland starving, and at the same time exasperatingly loud in menace and complaint, with England angry, ignorant, and misinformed, the time was ripe for an anti-Irish cry; and Lord Beaconsfield determined to play that villanous card.

The announcement of the Dissolution accordingly took the shape of a letter to the late Duke of Marlborough, who was then Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. This historic document was as strange in form as it was in opinion. It seemed as if Lord Beaconsfield desired to show the recrudescence of the worst faults of his earlier style. The language was pretentious, inflated, barely English at all. "All men of light and leading"—"to consolidate the co-operation"—these were two of the flowers of speech in this extraordinary document, at which all England laughed. The attack on the Irish Members had that extravagance which was the inseparable accompaniment of Lord Beaconsfield's affectation of principles and feelings which he did not entertain. The demand for self-government in Ireland,—which, by the way, at the moment the Irish Members were not very urgently pressing, being too busy with the primary question of saving their people from starvation,—was described as "a danger in its

ultimate result scarcely less disastrous than pestilence and famine." Then,—it being notorious that the leaders of the Liberal party at the time were just as hostile, and for that matter quite as unjust, as Lord Beaconsfield himself to Mr. Parnell and his principles,—Lord Beaconsfield went on to describe the Liberal party as being ready to "challenge the imperial character of this realm. Having attempted," went on this extraordinary effusion, "and failed to enfeeble our colonies by their policy of decomposition, they may perhaps now recognize in the disintegration of the United Kingdom a mode which will not only accomplish but precipitate their purpose."

To any one who will study the pages which follow this introduction, this manifesto will cause no surprise. He will see in it the devices, the arts, the morality, the tricks even of style, which run with such singular uniformity throughout the whole of Lord Beaconsfield's career. Exaggerated charges against opponents in which he believed less himself probably than anybody else; unscrupulous appeals to the lower rather than the better instincts of the people; language at once inflated and mysterious,—these are the characteristics of his appeals throughout his whole political life. He was, indeed, consistent; he conjured to the end.

Nobody had the least idea of what the result of the

appeal to the constituencies would be. In London,—to judge at least by the press,—the popularity of Lord Beaconsfield was still unshaken; and the general impression was that he would again have a majority. The first few days of the election removed this impression. Defeat followed defeat in disastrous succession, and when the final result was known, it was found that the Liberals had been returned with a success more overwhelming than even the great Conservative victory of 1874. Lord Beaconsfield saw that his day was over, and refused to accept the glozing consolings of his friends. Before he retired from office, however, he made a last attempt to gratify his hate of his successful rival. He recommended the Queen to send for Lord Hartington; and he bitterly complained to Lord Ronald Gower ("My Reminiscences," ii. 355) that Lord Hartington did not lend himself to this plot to deprive the Premier of the fruits of the victory which he was the most potent instrument in gaining. It was on April 19th that he went to Windsor Castle to surrender the Premiership; on the same day, twelve months after, he died.

But there was no sign of death being so near for some time after he left office. He took an active part in a meeting of his party which took place immediately after his fall; and he attended with sufficient regularity

in his place in the House of Lords. Within a few months after his retirement from office, he published another and the last of his novels. I have never read it; and pronounce no criticism. He spent a considerable part of the year 1880 in Hughenden; and there is an interesting account of him in his retreat in the book I have already quoted,—Lord Ronald Gower's "Reminiscences." He was always fond of the country; exaggerated the simple beauties of Hughenden (ii. 348); and with his nature at once dreamy and equable, was able to get on very well without society. As he put it to Lord Ronald Gower, "he likes his solitude," and "does not know what it is to feel bored even for a moment" (*Ib.*, 358). His main grievance seems to have been that he was still pestered with the cares of leadership; and there are amusing pictures of the not wholly undeserved contempt he had for the mediocrities whom he had elevated into spurious and undeserved importance (*Vide* 355-6).

In 1881, he took his place at the opening of Parliament as leader of the Conservatives in the House of Lords. But it was easy to see that his health was rapidly failing. The chief debate in which he took part was that initiated by Lord Lytton on the abandonment of Candahar by the Liberal Ministry. At least once in the course of that speech he lost his memory.

"There are," he said, "several places which are called the Keys of India. There is Merv . . . then there is a place whose name I forget" (*Times*, March 5, 1881)—meaning, of course, Herat, which for the moment had escaped his memory. I was present on the occasion of this speech; and it was certainly a painful and even a touching scene. Throughout the whole speech, Lord Beaconsfield had a dreadfully inanimate look; he appeared like a man in a dream; and even the respect to his age and his position did not prevent occasionally those indications of weariness which an assembly is as unable to control for any length of time as a child its emotions. It speaks eloquently of the hard fate of the public man, that—as he told Lord Granville—he had to swallow two powders before he was able to speak! Macaulay was right; power is well-watched slavery. The last time Lord Beaconsfield spoke in the House of Lords was in seconding the Vote of Condolence on the assassination of the late Czar. This was on March 15.

On March 19 he dined with the Prince of Wales at Marlborough House; and he seems to have caught a severe chill. On the following day he sent for Dr. Kidd, his usual medical adviser,—who, by the way, is a follower of the heterodox medical creed of Homœopathy. At first it was not thought that the illness was very serious, and he was able to hold a meeting

of his intimate political friends in his room towards the end of March, to discuss the proposed speech of Lord Cairns, in the House of Lords, on the conduct of the Ministry in the Transvaal. At a later period he corrected his last speech in the House of Lords, making the remark, "I will not go down to posterity, at all events, as talking bad grammar." The illness from which he suffered was a combination of gout, bronchitis, and asthma, and he went through the fluctuations of such complaints. The public took an enormous interest in his illness, and bulletins were issued twice daily. One of the touching incidents of his illness is, that on one occasion he asked to see a copy of the bulletin. "What have you said," he asked, "about me, that the British public will read when they awake in the morning?" On the bulletin being read to him which contained the words, "Takes nourishment well, and the strength is maintained," he remarked with a smile, "I think the well is a little too strong;" and with regard to the last phrase he said, "No doubt you are conscious of its accuracy; I only wish I were." The weather was variable, and when the sun shone brilliantly there were slight symptoms of recovery; but on Easter Monday the weather underwent a severe change for the worse; there came bitter east winds; and he gradually grew weaker. On Monday, April 18th, the

crisis came; at midnight of that day he grew very weak; lost strength rapidly; at two o'clock on Tuesday morning his intimate friends were sent for, and shortly after, he drew his last breath. It is stated that just before he died he used the words, "I am overwhelmed." *

The disappearance from the political stage of so familiar and picturesque a figure naturally called forth an outburst of popular emotion. In that moment the follies and mistakes of his career were forgotten, and the sorrow for his death unquestionably was profound and universal. He was buried, by his own directions, in the same vault as his wife, in Hughenden churchyard. As has been said, his fame, up to the present, has been increased, not diminished, by his death. To a period more remote than the present must it be left to decide whether the estimate of his character given in the following pages is true or false, just or unjust; whether I have drawn a portrait or a caricature.*

* The one point which came out in the voluminous accounts published during his illness and after his death, which corrects a statement in this volume, is as to his place of birth. He stated that when his father was young in his married life, he was poor, and lived in a chamber in the Adelphi (*Times*, April 20, 1881). His large store of books overflowed into every room in the house, including that in which the future Premier was born; hence the phrase in the general preface to his works, "Born in a Library."

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	BIRTH AND EARLY YEARS	1
II.	VIVIAN GREY	27
III.	THE FIRST ELECTION	43
IV.	THE SECOND ELECTION AT WYCOMBE	56
V.	REACHING THE NADIR	83
VI.	OTHER CONTROVERSIES	113
VII.	THE MAIDEN SPEECH	145
VIII.	"HUMBLE, BUT FERVENT"	177
IX.	YOUNG ENGLAND	202
X.	PREPARING THE MUTINY	248
XI.	THE FALL OF PEEL	279
XII.	PROTECTIONIST LEADER	360
XIII.	MINISTER	419
XIV.	"A PATRIOTIC OPPOSITION"	478
XV.	DICTATOR	602
INDEX		677

LORD BEACONSFIELD:

A BIOGRAPHY.

CHAPTER I.

BIRTH AND EARLY YEARS.

THERE are two stories with regard to the date of Lord Beaconsfield's birth: the one given by himself, the other by Mr. Picciotto. According to "Dod,"—that is, Lord Beaconsfield,—the future Premier was born on December 21, in the year 1805: Mr. Picciotto fixes the date of the birth in 1804—a year earlier.* There is the same uncertainty as to where Lord Beaconsfield was born: some say it was in Hackney; but the generally accepted tradition is that it was in the house at the south-west corner of Bloomsbury Square, facing Hart Street.

He was the son of Isaac D'Israeli, and of Maria, daughter of George (or Joshua) Basevi, of Brighton, and was the second of four children. His sister

* "Sketches of Anglo-Jewish History," p. 300.

Sarah, was the eldest child: Ralph and James were younger than he. Sarah accompanied her brother on one of his Eastern tours, and there are strong traces of her influence in "Alroy." She died in 1859, and her tomb may be seen in Willesden Cemetery, Paddington.* James was appointed by Lord

* Miss D'Israeli plays an important part in the life of her father. "Towards the end of the year 1839, still in the full vigour of his health and intellect," writes Lord Beaconsfield of his father, "he suffered a paralysis of the optic nerve; and that eye which so long a term had kindled with critical interest over the volumes of so many literatures was doomed to pursue its animated course no more." "Unhappily," proceeds Lord Beaconsfield, "his previous habits of study and composition rendered the habit of dictation intolerable, even impossible to him. But with the assistance of his daughter, whose intelligent solicitude he has commemorated in more than one grateful passage, he selected from his manuscript three volumes." ("Curiosities of Literature of Isaac D'Israeli," edited by his Son. Introduction, viii., ix.) Let me give one or two specimens from the "grateful passages" in which Isaac D'Israeli speaks of the "intelligent solicitude" of his daughter. In the Preface to the "Amenities of Literature" (Moxon, 1841,) occurs the following passage: "There is one more remark in which I must indulge; the author of the present work is denied the satisfaction of reading a single line of it, yet he flatters himself that he shall not trespass on the indulgence he claims for any slight inadvertencies. It has been confided to ONE whose eyes unceasingly pursue the volume for him who can never read, and whose eager hand traces the thought ere it vanish in the thinking; but it is only a father who can conceive the affectionate patience of filial devotion." (ix.-x.) "Public favour," he writes again in the "Miscellanies of Literature," (Moxon, 1840, Preface, vi.,) "has encouraged the republication of these various works, which, often referred to, have long been difficult to procure. It has been deferred from day to day with the intention of giving the subjects a more enlarged investigation; but I have delayed the task till it cannot be performed. One of the Calamities of Authors falls to my lot, the delicate organ of vision has suffered a singular disease—which no oculist by his touch can heal, and no physician by his knowledge can expound; so much remains concerning the frame of man unrevealed to man! In the midst of my library, I am, as it were, distant from

Beaconsfield to a Commissionership in the Inland Revenue, and died, rather suddenly, in 1868. Ralph, who also owes his elevation to his better-known brother, still holds the office of Deputy Clerk of Parliaments.

The first of the family to settle in England was

it. My unfinished labours, frustrated designs, remain paralysed. In the joyous heat I wander no longer over the wide circuit before me. The 'strucken deer' has the sad privilege to weep when he lies down, perhaps no more to course amid those far-distant woods where once he sought to range. Although thus compelled to refrain in a great measure from all manual labour, and incapacitated from the use of the pen and the book, these works notwithstanding have received many important corrections, having been read over to me with critical precision. Amid this partial darkness, I am not left without a distant hope nor a present consolation; and to HER who has so often lent to me the light of her eyes, the intelligence of her voice, and the careful work of her hand, the author must ever owe the 'debt immense' of paternal gratitude."

Mr. H. G. Bohn, the eminent publisher, in a letter to the *Richmond and Twickenham Times*, August 3, 1878, gives the following interesting particulars with regard to Mr. Meredith, the betrothed of Miss Disraeli: "The Mr. Meredith who was engaged to marry Miss Sarah D'Israeli was an accomplished and highly educated gentleman, the nephew and adopted heir of Mr. William Meredith, a retired contractor of considerable wealth who had remained a confirmed celibate to an advanced age. His name had become familiar in literary circles in consequence of his liberal patronage of Mr. Thomas Taylor, the so-called Platonist, whose translation of Aristotle in ten volumes quarto, and many other translations from the Greek, he encouraged and paid for to the extent of several thousand pounds, besides granting him an annuity for life. Mr. Meredith's great enjoyment was literary society, to which end he used during the London season to give monthly dinners—literary symposia—to parties of eight, rarely more, at which, besides myself, were usually present Mr. Thomas Taylor, Mr. Forsyth, Mr. Day, the Poor Law Commissioner, Mr. Meredith, junior, and occasionally one or both the D'Israelis. There were others, but I don't remember their names. The eldest Mr. Meredith died late in the summer of 1831, and with the exception of the annuity already granted to Mr. Thomas Taylor, bequeathed all

Benjamin D'Israeli, grandfather of the present bearer of the same name. As to the history of the family before their arrival in England, we have to rely wholly on the authority of Lord Beaconsfield; and his story is somewhat fanciful. His grandfather, he tells us,* was "an Italian descendant from one of those Hebrew families whom the Inquisition forced to emigrate from the Spanish Peninsula at the end of the fifteenth century, and who found a refuge in the more tolerant atmosphere of the Venetian Republic." In their new home they dropped their "Gothic surname," and "grateful to the God of Jacob, who had sustained them through unprecedented trials, and guarded them through unheard-of perils, they assumed the name of Disraeli, a name never borne before or since by any other family, in order that their race might for ever be recognised."

Continuing the story in the same strain, he tells

his property, including a fine library, to the nephew in question, who, however, died of fever at Gibraltar on his way home, a few days after his uncle, and before he could receive tidings of the event. In consequence of this, the property passed to his father's rather numerous family, which was by no means originally intended. Miss D'Israeli retired to Twickenham in 1832, where she resided till within a short time of her death, in one of the Ailsa Park villas, solacing herself with charitable pursuits and the cultivation of her small garden." The inscription on her monument is as follows: "In Memory of Sarah, only Daughter of Isaac D'Israeli, Esqre., Author of Curiosities of Literature. Born 29th Decr., 1802. Died 19th Decr., 1859." The monument consists of a Maltese Cross, which bears the letters I.H.S., and at the junction of the arms is the inscription "Thy will be done," graven in old English characters.

* "Curiosities of Literature of Isaac Disraeli," edited by his Son. I. Introduction, xx.—xxii. Fourteenth edition, 1849.

us that the Disraelis belonged to the higher Jewish caste of the Sephardim, and that they were related to the very best Hebrew families. It is not explained to us why Disraeli should be considered a name so peculiar in a Jew: it is simply Israel, with a 'd' prefixed, and a vowel added: in other words, an Italianized form of one of the very commonest of all Jewish names. Nor does Lord Beaconsfield explain why a name so peculiar, and by which the race was to "be for ever recognised," has been changed by himself. His father always spelled the name "D'Israeli," and so, as a rule, did Lord Beaconsfield himself in his earlier years. And, finally, we have no mention here of a third variety of the name. We hear nothing—either in connection with the remarkable name itself, or in the catalogue of the family's grand relations—of a Mr. Benjamin Disraell, who, in the earlier part of this century, carried on business as a money-lender in the city of Dublin. This omission is the more strange if it be true that Mr. Benjamin Disraell, of Dublin, was the uncle of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield.

Up to the publication of Mr. Picciotto's interesting book, to which I have already referred, the connection of Isaac D'Israeli with the Jewish faith was generally supposed to have been slight and brief, and certainly to have closed before the birth of his son. Mr. Picciotto has thrown, however, quite a different light upon this subject. It is true that Isaac D'Israeli, though he was for years a regular

subscriber to the synagogue,* was never a regular attendant at its services, inherited religious indifference on both sides,† and abandoned all communion with the faith on very small cause. But he remained in avowed communion with the creed till 1817, and did not completely break from it until 1821.

As a consequence, Lord Beaconsfield was brought up during his earlier years in the Jewish faith; and both he and his brothers were "all initiated into the covenant of Abraham." Mr. Picciotto even gives the name of the person who performed the "initiatory rite."‡

Lord Beaconsfield, however, did not long remain a member of his ancestral faith; but the circumstances of his entrance into the Christian Church

* Picciotto, p. 296.

† *Ibid.*, p. 295; and Lord Beaconsfield gives similar testimony. His grandfather, he says (*Curiosities of Literature*, I. Int., xxiii.), "appears never to have cordially and intimately mixed with his communion." And as to his grandmother, he writes: "My grandmother, the beautiful daughter of a family who had suffered much from persecution, had imbibed that dislike for her race which the vain are too apt to adopt when they find that they are born to public contempt. The indignant feeling that should be reserved for the persecutor, in the mortification of their disturbed sensibility, is too often visited on the victim; and the cause of annoyance is recognised, not in the ignorant malevolence of the powerful, but in the conscientious conviction of the innocent sufferer." (*Ibid.*) He adds that she was "so mortified by her social position that she lived until eighty without indulging in a tender expression." (*Ibid.* xxv.)

‡ "It may be interesting," writes Mr. Picciotto, "to our Jewish readers to learn that the gentleman who performed the initiatory rite on the present Premier of England was a relative of his mother, the late David Abarbenel Lindo, an influential member of the Spanish and Portuguese congregation, and a merchant of high commercial standing." (Note, p. 300.)

are not clearly known. According to one story, Mr. Rogers was the author of the great work of regeneration. The tale goes that the poet, who was an intimate friend of Isaac D'Israeli, took a fancy to the bookworm's bright young child; and, anxious that religion should not be a bar to his success in life, asked whether he had been baptized. Finding that, though twelve years of age, the young hopeful was still outside the pale of the Church, the pious poet brought him off to the nearest church, and had him baptized. This tale *ought* certainly to be true; it would fit in dramatically with the rest of Mr. Disraeli's career. Fancy the champion-in-chief of our Established Church owing his Christianity to the whim of a man unconnected with him in blood—and the whim of such a man! Heine says one ought to be very particular as to what grandfather he chooses; perhaps one ought to be even more particular in his choice of a godfather. It was certainly rather ominous to have as one's sponsor a man declared by the experienced Luttrell to be the greatest sensualist he had ever known.*

According to the other account, Lord Beaconsfield owes his admission to the Christian Church to a

* "Luttrell was talking of Moore and Rogers—the poetry of the former so licentious, that of the latter so pure; much of its popularity owing to its being so carefully weeded of everything approaching to indelicacy; and the contrast between the *lives* and the *works* of the two men—the former a pattern of conjugal and domestic regularity, the latter, of all the men he had ever known, the greatest sensualist."—*Greville's Memoirs*, iii. 324. Fourth edition.

Mrs. Ellis, the wife of a literary man well known some years ago. She, it is said, took advantage of old D'Israeli's absence, and had the son baptized.

However, whatever doubt there may exist as to Mr. Disraeli's sponsors, there is no doubt that he was baptized, and that the ceremony took place in St. Andrew's, Holborn.

This point, long in dispute, was settled by "Sylvanus Urban," of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, who, in the December number of 1875, gives the form on the page opposite as a copy from the Register of Baptisms.

We have glimpses in Lord Beaconsfield's own words of the manner of his life in his youth. His father is generally supposed to have stood for one of the figures in "Vivian Grey," and the description there given of him represents a man at ease in his circumstances, devoted to study, and but slightly attentive to the every-day cares of life. His son was probably allowed pretty much his own way; and was not so much reared, as allowed to grow. It is, perhaps, characteristic of the father's easy way of taking his child's destiny that he did not send him to Eton, or to any other of the fashionable schools. Indeed, the places where Lord Beaconsfield was educated are so obscure that there is some difficulty in finding out which they were. I believe he spent some portion of his boyhood in a boarding-school at Winchester; not in the great school of the town, but in a private establishment there. He

PARISH OF ST. ANDREW, HOLBORN,

IN THE CITY OF LONDON AND IN THE COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX.

Extract from the Register Book of Baptisms. (*Page* 80.)

When Baptized.	Child's Christian Name.	Parents' Names.		Abode.	Quality, Trade, or Profession.	By whom the Ceremony was performed.
		Christian.	Surname.			
1817.		Isaac				
July 31.	Benjamin,	and	D'Israeli.	King's	Gentleman.	J. Thimbleby
	Son of	Maria		Road.		
No. 633.						
	Said to be	about 12	years old	Born.		

The above is a true extract from the Register Book of Baptisms kept in the Parish Registry.

Witness my hand, this 20th day of November, in the year 1875,

(Signed) H. W. Blunt, Curate.

is also said to have attended a school taught by a Unitarian clergyman at Walthamstow; and in an essay in the *Edinburgh Review*, by Mr. A. Hayward, Q.C., I find it stated that he received part of his education in Hampshire.

Whatever he does know, however, Lord Beaconsfield probably owes principally to himself. We can quite fancy that one of his dreamy and imaginative nature took a strong delight in poring over the quaint volumes with which the library of the author of the "Curiosities of Literature" was filled. The history of his own people, it is evident, was one of the subjects of which he was passionately fond; for we find traces in several of his works—particularly in his early ones—of considerable acquaintance with the story of the Jewish people. The thoughts which, in these hours of boyish study, were suggested of the contrast between the sublime Hebrew past and the mean Hebrew present, had their share in firing the boy's imagination, in stirring his ambition, perhaps also in hardening his heart.

One great advantage Lord Beaconsfield reaped from the position of his father: he obtained through it the *entrée* into good London society. Self-confident, ready-tongued, and handsome, it is evident that he made the most of this advantage; and we find him at a very early age a prominent figure at one of the most prominent *salons* of London in that day.

While Mr. Disraeli was a youth, the Countess of Blessington and the Count d'Orsay were still in the

prime of life and the heydey of fortune. The manner of life which the Countess led has been so often described, that I may dismiss the subject in a few words. Her ladyship, it is known, was the daughter of a drunken, brutal, and impecunious Irish squire, and spent her earlier days in a small town in Ireland. Conscious at the same time of extremely brilliant talents and brilliant beauty, she must have felt with terrible bitterness the squalor of her early surroundings, and have learned to prize with fierce earnestness the advantages of wealth. Then, she received from childhood the bad training of those who have to hide from the outside world the misery of their circumstances. And, in addition, she was allowed unrestrained liberty, and made ample use of the indulgence by audacious flirtations with the garrison officers. Her girlhood was the fittest training for an after-life of female Bohemianism. Nor was her womanhood passed in circumstances more favourable. She was married before she was sixteen to a Captain Farmer, who was, or became, a wild and insane drunkard. Separated from him, she passed some years as the companion of a former admirer. Captain Farmer died in 1817; four months after his death, his widow was married to the Earl of Blessington. The death of the Earl of Blessington in 1829 again left her a widow.

With the Countess of Blessington lived Count d'Orsay. As he, too, has often been described, I may dismiss him also with a few words. He had,

it is well known, been married to the daughter of the Earl, and the step-daughter of the Countess of Blessington. The match, for some reason or other, proved unhappy. The Count, his wife, and the Countess of Blessington had at one time lived all three together, but after two years of this life the young Countess took leave of her husband and her step-mother, and from that time till their death, in various places and amid various fortunes, Count d'Orsay and the Countess of Blessington lived together. They were perfectly suited the one to the other, and evidently were deeply attached. But as to whether their relations were immoral, as they were equivocal, society had then, as now, strong suspicions, yet no absolute certainty. It is, however, but just to say that, in his last days, when the heavy hand of illness had already fallen on him, and the heavier hand of death was very near, and when already the Countess was dead, Count d'Orsay solemnly declared that he had never borne any love towards her but that of a son to a mother.

The Count was blessed by nature with a fine face and a splendid figure, and, as is known, was, amid all the dandies of his time, the acknowledged leader of fashion, dictating with equal omnipotence the code of a ballroom and the shape of a hat. Nature, besides, had bestowed on him the still greater blessing of perfect health, and accordingly he was cheerful amid multitudinous embarrassments, and was never afflicted by that weariness of spirit which so often

afflicts the favourites of fortune. He was, besides, the paragon of politeness, had artistic ability of a high order, and those who knew him best (Lord Beaconsfield among the rest *) declare that, besides those showy talents, he had a keen and solid intellect.

The company that Mr. Disraeli met at the Countess of Blessington's was of a motley character. The future Emperor of the French, then plain Prince Louis Napoleon, was often there—taciturn, abstracted, and, according to the appearance of the times, a dreamer of wild dreams. And with him came, too, M. de Morny, engaged as yet in composing light love poems, occasionally strumming the guitar, and giving to but few, and perhaps not even to himself, any indication of the will of iron and the heart of steel that could plot the strangulation of a republic, the quick assassination of hundreds in the streets, and the slow murder of thousands in the pontoons.

There, too, probably Mr. Disraeli occasionally heard Theodore Hook's good-natured, and Horace Smith's pointed, wit, Tom Moore's melodies, and the evil stories of Rogers; and it may have been in this debateable ground that he first laid the foundations of that friendship with Lord Lyndhurst which was to so greatly help and so deeply influence his career.

It will be seen that, however varied the nationality, the pursuit, and the character of the people who met at the Countess of Blessington's, there was yet a certain similarity—a sort of family likeness—between

* "Lothair," General Preface, xviii.

several of them. The equivocal character of the house was reflected in the equivocal character of the guests.

Many of the guests, like the host, were gamblers with fortune: great in hope and deep in debt, rich in talents and energy, but with a career spoiled or not yet come, and ever expecting the morrow that would bring sublime fortune—or abysmal ruin.

We see, then, the double influences to which the young Disraeli was subjected. On the one hand, there was the literary quiet of his home; on the other, the bustle of a society in which he moved among the active and the great of the earth. His surroundings at once suggested literary effort and political ambition.

The nature, too, which was exposed to these different sets of circumstances, was, like that of most men, a very mixed one. On one side of his character dreamy, imaginative, and abstracted, young Disraeli was on the other active, practical, and observant. And now we proceed to describe the fruits which this variety of circumstances and this mixture of character produced.

But before I proceed to the description of the young Disraeli's mental character, it will not be amiss to say something of his rather remarkable exterior. According to unanimous contemporary testimony, he was singularly handsome. He had long raven locks, eyes bright with intelligence and vivacity, a regular nose, and a complexion of ultra-romantic pallor. Unfortunately, Mr. Disraeli appears

to have been as conscious of his beauty as of his other gifts. There are traditions of his having outdandied even the leaders in that age of dandies. We hear of coats of velvet and strange cut, flashing rings, and interminable chains, tasselled canes, and such like extravagances.*

In 1826 occurred a remarkable event in Lord Beaconsfield's life: in that year was published the first volume of "Vivian Grey." The success of the

* "He was," writes one of Mr. Disraeli's most caustic critics, (J. C. Jeaffreson, "Novels and Novelists,") "an egregious dandy. Foppery to an extreme of extravagance was the mode with lads thirty years ago; but he outstripped every one of his competitors in personal adornment. At this day matrons of fashion often recall the graces, the separate trappings, and the entire appearance of Disraeli the younger as he made his first essay in the great world; his ringlets, of silken black hair, his flashing eyes, his effeminate air and lisping voice, his dress coat of black velvet lined with white satin, his white kid gloves, with his wrist surmounted by a long hanging fringe of black silk, and his ivory cane, of which the handle, inlaid with gold, was relieved by more black silk in the shape of a tassel."

"D'Israeli," writes N. P. Willis, ("Pencillings by the Way,") describing an evening at the Countess of Blessington's, "had arrived before me, and sat in the deep window looking out upon Hyde Park, with the last rays of daylight reflected from the gorgeous gold flowers of a splendidly embroidered waistcoat. Patent leather pumps, a white stick with a black cord and tassel, and a quantity of chains about his neck and pockets, served to make him, even in the dim light, a conspicuous object. . . . D'Israeli has one of the most remarkable faces I ever saw. He is lividly pale, and, but for the energy of his action and the strength of his lungs, would seem to be a victim to consumption. His eye is black as Erebus, and has the most mocking, lying-in-wait sort of expression conceivable. His mouth is alive with a kind of working and impatient nervousness, and when he has burst forth, as he does constantly, with a particularly successful cataract of expression, it assumes a curl of triumphant scorn that would be worthy of Mephistopheles. His hair is as extraordinary as his taste in waistcoats. A thick heavy mass of jet-black ringlets falls over his left cheek almost to his collarless stock, while on the right temple

book was enormous. Its wit, its cynicism, its splendid diction, but above all its bold introduction under transparent names of the most prominent characters of the day, made it the book of the season. It was everywhere called for; in the papers of the day we find mention of its having even had the honour of royal perusal, and the author became one of the

it is parted and put away with the smooth carefulness of a girl's, and shines most unctuously—

'With thy incomparable oil, Macassar!'"

We have from this all-too-graphic writer, and others, descriptions as to Mr. Disraeli's manner and conversation at this stage of his career.

The conversation on the evening Mr. Willis celebrates turned on Beckford of Fonthill. "D'Israeli," continues the writer, "was the only one at the table who knew him (Beckford), and the style in which he gave a sketch of his habits and manners was worthy of himself. I might as well attempt to gather up the foam of the sea as to convey an idea of the extraordinary language in which he clothed his description. There were at least five words in every sentence that must have been very much astonished at the use they were put to, and yet no others apparently could so well have conveyed his idea. He talked like a racehorse approaching the winning-post—every muscle in action, and the utmost energy of expression flung out into every burst. Victor Hugo, and his extraordinary novels, came next under discussion, and D'Israeli, who was fired by his own eloquence, started off, *apropos des bottes*, with a long story of impalement he had seen in Upper Egypt. It was as good, and perhaps as authentic, as the description of the Chow-tow-tow in 'Vivian Grey.' The circumstantiality of the account was equally horrible and amusing. Then followed the sufferer's history, with a score of murders and barbarities heaped together, like Martius's 'Feast of Belshazzar,' with a mixture of horror and splendour that was unparalleled in my experience of improvisation. No mystic priest of the Corybantes could have worked himself up into a finer frenzy of language. Count d'Orsay kept up during the whole conversation and narration a running fire of witty parentheses, half French and half English; and with champagne in all the pores, the hours flew on very dashingly. Lady Blessington left us towards

lions of the hour. The second part of the story was written in 1827, and was much inferior to the first. In 1828 appeared "Popanilla," a satire upon the leading political topics of the day. It is a very clever work, and, indeed, Mr. Disraeli's chief excellence in composition lies in his power of clever burlesque.

To this period also belongs the "Young Duke," a work somewhat of the "Vivian Grey" style.

midnight, and then the conversation took a rather political turn, and something was said of O'Connell. D'Israeli's lips were playing upon the edge of his champagne glass, which he had just drained, and off he was again with a description of the interview he had had with the agitator the day before, ending in a story of an Irish dragoon who was killed in the Peninsula. His name was Sarsfield. His arm was shot off, and he was bleeding to death. When told he could not live, he called for a large silver goblet, out of which usually he drank claret. He held to it the gushing artery, and filled it to the brim with blood. Looking at it for a moment, he turned it slowly upon the ground, muttering to himself, 'If that had been for Ireland!' and expired. You can have no idea how thrillingly this story was told. Fonblanque, who is a cold political satirist, saw nothing in the man's 'decanting his claret,' and so Vivian Grey got into a passion, and for a while was silent."

"Many years ago, upwards of twenty," writes Mr. Madden, the biographer of the Countess of Blessington, "I frequently met Mr. Disraeli at Lady Blessington's abode in Seamore Place. It needed no ghost from the grave, or rapping spirit from the invisible world, to predicate even then the success of the young Disraeli in public life. Though in general society he was usually silent and reserved, he was closely observant. It required generally a subject of more than common interest to produce the fitting degree of enthusiasm to animate him and to stimulate him into the exercise of his marvellous powers of conversation. When duly excited, however, his command of language was truly wonderful; his power of sarcasm unsurpassed, the readiness of his wit, the quickness of his perception, the grasp of his mind, that enabled him to seize all the points of any subject under discussion, persons would only call in question who had never been in his company at the period I refer to."

Like the earlier work, it professes to be a picture of fashionable society, but instead of the *élite* being spoken of with the scorn which we find in the earlier production, they are described in terms of slavish adulation. It is almost astounding, indeed, to find that Lord Beaconsfield is not ashamed at the present day to republish this very poor and servile production of his youth. The book was at the time very sharply criticised, and some terms which were employed towards it by the then recently established *Westminster Review* are very severe, and also very true, but can scarcely be mentioned to ears so delicate as those of our present generation. From 1828 to 1831 he was engaged for the most part in foreign travel. Of this portion of his life we have no direct information beyond incidental allusions in some of his published works. For instance, in one of the notes to "Alroy" we find it stated that he visited the Mosque of Omar in Jerusalem, and endeavoured to enter it at the risk of his life.* It is also evident from other passages of his works that he visited the chief countries of the East. This tour had a considerable influence on his writings and his character. In the presence of Jerusalem, the cradle of his race, he seems to have been elevated to a serener and better atmosphere than that of the *salôns* of London, and the works which he produced at this period are much better in tone and finer in feeling than the precocious cynicism of "Vivian Grey," and the ultra-fashionable

* New edition. note 35, p. 76.

pretences of the "Young Duke." During these travels he wrote "Contarini Fleming." This he tells us, in the General Preface to his works he wrote in 1870,* was published anonymously in the midst of a revolution, and was almost stillborn. He goes on, however, to add that the story gradually found admirers—amongst others Goethe, Beckford, and Heine. In an earlier preface, written in 1845, he speaks of the design of the work as being to describe "the development and formation of the poetic character," a subject "virgin in the imaginative literature of every country;" † and he also tells us that for the purpose of his story he thought it better to select "a character whose position in life should be at variance, and, as it were, in constant conflict with his temperament." He was a being who, while of southern descent, was to live in a Scandinavian country, and whose "nervous temperament" was, in the midst of "the snows and forests of the North," to be continually acted upon by "the image of a distant and most romantic city." Carrying out this plan, he makes his hero the descendant from a Venetian family, and a dweller in a northern country. In other words, in "Contarini Fleming," as in nearly all his earlier works, Mr. Disraeli, under the name of another person, is really describing himself. He, too, a dweller in the harsh and sunless climate of England, traces back his descent to ancestors who lived by the shores of

* General Preface, xix.

† Preface to "Contarini Fleming," edition 1846.

the Adriatic, and, in remoter times, moved amid the stately temples of Jerusalem; and, in the midst of our mist and fog, his imagination is haunted by the memory of the clear air of Venice, and the brilliant sun of Palestine. These things made the work extremely interesting. As a piece of composition, however, it is very unequal. There are in it passages of poetic self-abandonment, of pure eloquence, and of passionate feeling, that almost make us doubt whether they could have been written by the cruel, hard man of the world with whom we are now all familiar. But, on the other hand, there are some scenes which are fantastically and wildly absurd, and which it is scarcely possible to conceive as the products of a man of Lord Beaconsfield's real literary ability and genuine wit, for they show utter deficiency in the humour that distinguishes between bathos and sense. But literary taste is not one of Lord Beaconsfield's gifts, and even in his latest utterances, as in his earliest, we find him mistaking tawdry ornament for real grace.

As in "Vivian Grey," we are told at considerable length the history of Contarini Fleming's schoolboy days, and of his feelings at this period. It is rather interesting to find that Contarini "entertained at this time a deep conviction that life must be intolerable unless" he "were the greatest of men." "I longed," says the hero, "to wave my inspiring sword at the head of armies, or dash into the very heat and blaze of eloquent faction."*

* "Contarini Fleming," new edition, 29.

We have also a description of a schoolboy fight, which is not altogether without interest as presaging the future career of the man who is telling this story. Contarini has succeeded in knocking his antagonist down; "and indeed," he continues, "I would not have waited for their silly rules of mock combat, but have destroyed him in his prostration." * The reader, in the course of this narrative, will find many actions recorded in which Lord Beaconsfield showed no inclination whatever to wait for the "silly rules of mock combat" which are supposed to regulate the struggles between honourable men.

The father of Contarini Fleming is one of the ministers in a small Court, and if I had space to quote at length, I might be able to supply the reader with many extracts which foreshadow, in the description of the character of this minister, some of the manners of Lord Beaconsfield, and some of the scenes in which he has taken part. Ultimately, Contarini Fleming becomes the private secretary of his father, and assists him very considerably when a contest arises between him and a Count de Moltke for the premiership of the country. Among other things, he writes an anonymous pamphlet which has the effect of throwing his father's rival into ridicule. We have also, at this period, an account of the production of a story called "Manstein," and the character of this work corresponds very much, almost word for word,

* *Ibid.* 37.

with that of "Vivian Grey." But the most remarkable and important scene in "Contarini Fleming" is that in which is described the part the hero took in a congress. According to Contarini's own account of the story, his father, the Prime Minister, and the King, had both been thoroughly defeated by the ambassadors of the other powers, until he, who was acting as private secretary of the meeting, suddenly burst in with a happy piece of audacity, and succeeded in carrying all those points which his colleagues had almost given up in despair. The sentences which follow the description of this incident I give in full, partly because of the wondrous prophecy which they contain, and partly because it appears to me to be almost the very best passage that Lord Beaconsfield has ever written:—

"The Conference broke up, and my father retired with the King, and desired me to wait for him in the hall. I was alone. I was excited. I felt the triumph of success. I felt that I had done a great action. I felt all my energies. I walked up and down the hall in a phrenzy of ambition, and I thirsted for action. There seemed to me no achievement of which I was not capable, and of which I was not ambitious. In imagination I shook thrones and founded empires. I felt myself a being born to breathe in an atmosphere of revolution.

"My father came not. Time wore away, and the day died. It was one of those stern, sublime sunsets, which is almost the only appearance in the north in which nature enchanted me. I stood at the window, gazing on the burnished masses that, for a moment, were suspended in their fleeting and capricious beauty on the far horizon. I turned aside and looked at the rich trees suffused with the crimson light, and ever and anon irradiated by the dying shoots of a golden ray. The deer were stealing home

to their bowers, and I watched them till their golden and glancing forms gradually lost their lustre in the declining twilight. The glory had now departed, and all grew dim. A solitary star alone was shining in the grey sky, a bright and solitary star.

"And as I gazed upon the sunset, and the star, and the dim beauties of the coming eve, my mind grew calm, and all the bravery of my late reverie passed away. And I felt indeed a disgust for all the worldliness on which I had been late pondering. And there arose in my mind a desire to create things beautiful as that golden sun and that glittering star.

"I heard my name. The hall was now darkened. In the distance stood my father. I joined him. He placed his arm affectionately in mine, and said to me, "My son, you will be Prime Minister of ——— ; perhaps something greater." *

One of the points which Lord Beaconsfield keeps most distinctly and frequently before our minds, is the already mentioned fact that Contarini Fleming is a foreigner in a foreign land; that he has no real communion of feeling with the people among whom he lives; that, in point of fact, he rather despises those whom he helps his father to rule.

* *Ibid.* 176-7. It is shown by an anecdote in Mr. M'Cullagh Torrens's Life of Lord Melbourne that it was not in the pages of fiction only that Lord Beaconsfield ventured to prophecy the sublime climax of his career.

"To celebrate her younger brother's birthday," writes Mr. Torrens, "Mrs. Norton asked to dinner the other members of the family, two of her husband's colleagues in the Ministry, Lord Melbourne, and the author of 'Vivian Grey,' in whom she had recently discovered the son of her father's intimate friend. Young Disraeli was not long returned from his travels in the East, with traits of which he had interested her on the occasion of their first acquaintance. He had just then been defeated in an attempt to get into Parliament for the borough of Wycombe, where he attributed his failure to want of support by the

Contarini asks us to allow that "some exemption from the sectarian prejudices which embitter life may be surely expected from one who, by a curious combination of circumstances, finds himself without country, without kindred, and without friends." * "Wherever I moved," he tells us again, "I looked around me and beheld a race different from myself. There was no sympathy between my frame and the rigid climate whither I had been brought to live." † "Their blue eyes," he says, speaking of his two brothers, "their flaxen hair, and their white visages, claimed no kindred with my Venetian countenance." ‡ And in another passage he speaks of "the vast quantity of dull, lowering, entangling ties that formed the great domestic mesh, and bound me to a country which I detested, covered me with a climate which killed me, surrounded me with manners with which I could not sympathize, and duties which nature impelled me not

Whigs. Mrs. Norton presented him, after dinner, to the Home Secretary, who had the power, she said, of retrieving the disappointment if he chose; and whose frank and open manner led to a long conversation in which Mr. Disraeli mentioned the circumstances of his late discomfiture, dwelling on each particular with the emphasis which every young man of ambition since Parliament was invented is sure to lay upon the broken promises and scandalous behaviour of his victorious foes. The Minister was attracted more as he listened to the uncommonplace language and spirit of the youthful politician, and thought to himself he would be well worth serving. Abruptly, but with a certain tone of kindness which took away any air of assumption, he said, 'Well now, tell me, what do you want to be?' The quiet gravity of the reply fairly took him aback. 'I want to be Prime Minister.'"—*Memoir of the Right Hon. William, 2nd Viscount Melbourne*, by W. M. Torrens, M.P., i. 425-6.

* *Ibid.* 4. † *Ibid.* 5. ‡ *Ibid.* 60.

to fulfil." "I felt," he adds, "that to ensure my emancipation, it was necessary at once to dissolve all ties of blood and affection, and to break away from those links *which chained me as a citizen to a country which I abhorred.*" *

These passages, the frank expressions of youth, explain a great deal in Lord Beaconsfield's career. If we find him indifferent to the ordinary feelings of our country, sympathising with its passions only so far as they serve his own purposes, and heedless of its interests save when they are bound up with his own, he himself supplies in "Contarini Fleming" the explanation. We cannot expect, he tells us, that he, the raven-locked, dark-eyed, dark-skinned child of Venice and Jerusalem, should have any community of feeling with a race of blue eyes, flaxen hair, and white visages, who dwell in a country he detests and under a climate that kills him.

It is significant, also, that the great political idols of Contarini Fleming's admiration are Alberoni and Ripperda, the two foreigners who succeeded, by means of boldness, intrigue, and unscrupulousness, in obtaining the chief power in Spain.

The remaining portion of "Contarini Fleming" is taken up with a description of the hero's travels in Italy and the East. There are some passages which are extremely interesting, but which I have to pass over as not bearing directly on my subject. There is also a love story, which, like most of the other

* *Ibid.* 60.

love stories told by Lord Beaconsfield, is extravagant, exaggerated, and unreal.

"Alroy" is even a still stranger and more extravagant work than "Contarini Fleming." It describes a prince of the captivity who in the twelfth century succeeded in conquering the Moslem rulers of the Jews, and establishing a new Jewish empire. In this work, more so even than in "Tancred," we have the clearest view of the Hebrew side of Lord Beaconsfield's character. It is one long eulogium of the glories of the Jewish race, and one long aspiration for the revival of its power and fame. As to style, the story is principally remarkable for the occurrence of passages written in a sort of jargon, half prose, half rhythm. Some of these passages are eloquent, but the majority are ludicrous in the extreme. This is all the notice I can take of the two last-mentioned productions of the Prime Minister's pen. In them both, as I have pointed out, we have the same central figure, and that figure is the writer himself. They thus expose to us the early feelings and the first phases of the career which has now become interesting for all time. But "Vivian Grey" yields a still richer harvest than even "Contarini Fleming" or "Alroy" of this kind of valuable information. With "Vivian Grey," then, which I have hitherto only glanced at, I shall deal more fully, and I now proceed, in another chapter, to give an analysis of that work.

CHAPTER II.

VIVIAN GREY.

"VIVIAN GREY"—on the front page of whose history is the ominous motto,

> "Why, then, the world's mine oyster
> Which I with sword will open,"—

is the son of a distinguished literary man. At an early age he gives promise of future eminence. Being sent to school, "in a very few days Vivian Grey was decidedly the most popular" boy in the place. "He was 'so dashing! so devilish good-tempered! so completely up to everything!'" *

Of course Vivian becomes the leader of the school; and how does he employ his position? Tutors are very often gentlemen by birth as well as by education, but our superior hero teaches his schoolfellows that "ushers were to be considered as a species of upper servants, and were to be treated with civility certainly, as all servants are by gentlemen, but that . . . . any fellow voluntarily conversing with an usher was to be cut dead dead by the whole school." † He then forms

* New edition, 5. † *Ibid.* 8.

a conspiracy against the authorities with great skill, for already it has been discovered that he has "the tongue of a serpent," * and, in the end, leaves the school amid a blaze of triumphant vengeance most artfully obtained.†

"In England," reflects the writer of "Vivian Grey," "personal distinction is the only passport to the society of the great. Whether this distinction arise from fortune, family, or talent is immaterial, but certain it is, to enter into high society, a man must either have blood, a million, or a genius." ‡ As the father of Vivian Grey is possessed of genius, he is able to "enter into the society of the great," and "this boy of nineteen began to think this society delightful," § and being, unlike other boys, entirely free from modesty, made himself at home in it. Meantime, "having got through an immense series of historical reading, he had stumbled upon a branch of study certainly the most delightful in the world; but, for a boy, as certainly the most perilous—THE STUDY OF POLITICS." "And now everything was solved! the inexplicable longings of his soul, which had so often perplexed him, were at length explained. . . . . He paced his chamber in an agitated spirit, and panted for the Senate." ‖ "The time drew nigh for Vivian to leave his home for Oxford." . . . . But "this pupil, this stripling, who was going to begin his education, had all the desires of a matured mind. . . . . He was already"—at nineteen!—"a cunning

* *Ibid.* 10. † *Ibid.* 12. ‡ *Ibid.* 16. § *Ibid.* ‖ *Ibid.* 17.

reader of human hearts, and felt conscious that his was a tongue which was born to guide human beings. The idea of Oxford to such an individual was an insult.*

Communing with himself as to how "he could obtain his magnificent ends," Vivian Grey thus speaks: "The Bar, pooh! law and bad jokes till we are forty; and then, with the most brilliant success, the prospect of gout and a coronet. Besides, to succeed as an advocate, I must be a great lawyer; and to be a great lawyer, I must give up my chance of being a great man. The Services in war time are fit only for desperadoes (and that truly am I); but, in peace, are fit only for fools. The Church is more rational. Let me see: I should certainly like to act Wolsey; but the thousand and one chances against me! And truly I feel my destiny should not be on a chance. Were I the son of a millionaire or a noble, I might have all. Curse on my lot! that the want of a few rascal counters, and the possession of a little rascal blood, should mar my fortunes!" †

"Why," continue these reflections, "have there been statesmen who have never ruled, and heroes who have never conquered? Why have glorious philosophers died in a garret? and why have there been poets whose only admirer has been Nature in her echoes? It must be that these beings have thought only of themselves, and, constant and elaborate students of their own glorious natures, have forgotten

* *Ibid* 18. † *Ibid.*

or disdained the study of all others. *Yes! we must mix with the herd; we must enter into their feelings; we must humour their weaknesses; we must sympathise with the sorrows that we do not feel; and share the merriment of fools. Oh, yes! to rule men, we must be men; to prove that we are strong, we must be weak; to prove that we are giants, we must be dwarfs;* even as the Eastern Genie was hid in the charmed bottle. Our wisdom must be concealed under folly, and our constancy under caprice." *

"I have been often struck," proceeds our youthful philosopher, "by the ancient tales of Jupiter's visits to the earth. In these fanciful adventures, the god bore no indication of the Thunderer's glory; but was a man of low estate, a herdsman, a hind, often even an animal. A Mighty spirit has in Tradition, Time's great moralist, perused the wisdom of the ancients. Even in the same spirit, I would explain Jove's terrestrial visitings. *For, to govern man, even the god appeared to feel as a man; and sometimes as a beast, was apparently influenced by their vilest passions. Mankind, then, is my great game.*" †

Having reached this view of life, Vivian Grey contemplates his means of success. "At this moment, how many a powerful noble wants only wit to be a minister; and what wants Vivian Grey to attain the same end? That noble's influence. . . . . Supposing I am in contact with this magnifico, am I prepared? Now let me probe my very soul. Does

* *Ibid.* † *Ibid.* 19.

my cheek blanch? I have the mind for the conception; and I can perform right skilfully upon the most splendid of musical instruments, the human voice, to make those conceptions beloved by others. There wants but one thing more: courage, pure, perfect courage; and does Vivian Grey know fear? He laughed an answer of bitterest derision." *

Soon after these resolutions have been formed, Vivian Grey is brought "in contact" with a "magnifico," and on him he at once resolves to try his newly formed arts. The Marquess of Carabas (this was the magnifico) dines one day with Horace Grey, Vivian's father, and others. After dinner, "the peer, at the top of the table, began to talk politics. . . . . The Marquess was decidedly wrong, and was sadly badgered by the civil M.P. and the professor. . . . . The Marquess refuted, had recourse to contradiction, and was too acute a man to be insensible to the forlornness of his situation; when, at this moment, a voice proceeded from the end of the table, from a young gentleman who had hitherto preserved a profound silence, but whose silence, if the company were to have judged from the tones of his voice, and the matter of his communication, did not altogether proceed from a want of confidence in his own abilities.

"'In my opinion,' said Mr. Vivian Grey, ... 'his Lordship has been misunderstood.' . . . . The eyes of the Marquess sparkled, and the mouth of the Marquess was closed."

* *Ibid.*

Does not the next passage sound exactly like a description of one of Mr. Disraeli's own speeches at the present day?

"Mr. Vivian Grey proceeded with the utmost sang froid; he commented upon expressions, split and subtilised words, insinuated opinions, and finally quoted a whole passage of Bolingbroke to prove that the opinion of the most noble the Marquess of Carabas was one of the soundest, wisest, and most convincing of opinions that ever was promulgated by mortal man." *

The quotation from Bolingbroke was invented by the defender of the Marquess, for "it was a rule with Vivian Grey never to advance any opinion as his own. It was, therefore, his system always to advance an opinion as that of some eminent and considered personage." † Accordingly, "Vivian Grey was reputed in the world as having the most astonishing memory that ever existed; for there was scarcely a subject of discussion in which he did not gain the victory, by the great names he enlisted on his side of the argument." ‡

"Vivian did not let the peer escape him in the drawing-room. He soon managed to enter into conversation with him; and certainly the Marquess of Carabas never found a more entertaining companion. Vivian discoursed on a new Venetian liqueur, and taught the Marquess how to mull Moselle, an operation of which the Marquess had never heard (as who has?);

* *Ibid.* 24-5. † *Ibid.* 25-6. ‡ *Ibid.* 26.

and then the flood of anecdotes, and little innocent personalities, and the compliments so exquisitely introduced, that they scarcely appeared to be compliments; and the voice so pleasant, and conciliating, and the quotation from the Marquess's own speech; and the wonderful art of which the Marquess was not aware, by which, during all this time, the lively, chattering, amusing, elegant conversationist, so full of scandal, politics, and cookery, did not so much appear to be Mr. Vivian Grey as the Marquess of Carabas himself."

"'Well, I must be gone,' said the fascinated noble; 'I really have not felt in such spirits for some time; I almost fear I have been vulgar enough to be amusing, eh! eh! eh! But you young men are sad fellows, eh! eh! eh! Don't forget to call on me; good evening! And Mr. Vivian Grey! Mr. Vivian Grey!' said his lordship, returning, 'you'll not forget the receipt you promised me for making tomahawk punch?'

"'Certainly not, my lord,' said the young man. 'Only it must be invented first,' thought Vivian, as he took up his light to retire. 'But never mind, never mind—

"'Chapeau bas! chapeau bas!
Glorie au Marquis de Carabas!!'"*

Vivian Grey, determined to make good use of the acquaintance thus begun, calls on the Marquess a few days after the dinner, flatters the feeble old man's

* *Ibid.* 26-7.

vanity to the top of its bent, and ultimately persuades him to attempt the formation of a political party.* As a result, he becomes an intimate of the Marquess, and is spoken of constantly by the enchanted nobleman as "the most astonishingly clever and prodigiously accomplished fellow that ever breathed." †

"But it must not be supposed that Vivian was to all the world the fascinating creature that he was to the Marquess of Carabas. Many complained that he was reserved, silent, satirical, and haughty. . . . *A smile for a friend, and a sneer for the world, is the way to govern mankind, and such was the motto of Vivian Grey.*" ‡

Having been invited to Château Desir, the country seat of the Marquess of Carabas, Vivian Grey practises his arts on others with the same rapid and astonishing success. "He complimented her Ladyship's poodle, quoted German to Mrs. Felix Lorraine, and taught the Marquess to eat cabinet pudding with Curaçoâ sauce; . . . . and then his stories, his scandal, and his sentiment; stories for the Marquess, scandal for the Marchioness, and sentiment for the Marquess's sister." §

"The first week at Château Desir," ‖ we are told, "passed pleasantly enough. Vivian's morning was amply occupied in maturing with the Marquess the grand principles of the new political system: in weigh-

* *Ibid.* 28-35. † *Ibid.* 35. ‡ *Ibid.* 35-6. § *Ibid.* 40-41.
‖ Among the guests at Château Desir is a Lord Beaconsfield.

ing interests, in balancing connections, and settling 'what side was to be taken on the great questions.' *Oh, politics, thou splendid juggle!* The whole business, although so magnificent in its result appeared very easy to the two counsellors, for it was one of the first principles of Mr. Vivian Grey that everything was possible. Men did fail in life to be sure, and, after all, very little was done by the generality; but still all these failures and all this inefficiency might be traced to a want of physical and mental courage. . . . . *Now Vivian Grey was conscious that there was at least one person in the world who was no craven either in body or in mind, and so he had long come to the comfortable conclusion that it was impossible that his career could be anything but the most brilliant.*" *

A grand dinner is given in Château Desir, and Vivian Grey distinguishes himself at it in his usual manner. "In process of time, Mr. Vivian Grey made his entrance. There were a few vacant seats at the bottom of the table, 'Luckily for him,' as kindly remarked Mr. Grumbleton. To the astonishment and indignation, however, of this worthy squire, the late comer passed by the unoccupied position, and proceeded onward with undaunted coolness, until he came to about the middle of the middle table, and which was nearly the best situation in the hall." † After all, does not mere "cheek" in the same way obtain good seats in other places as well as at dinner-tables—on the Treasury Bench, for instance?

* *Ibid.* 43-4. † *Ibid.* 61.

It will be found in the course of the following narrative that the Corn Laws played a very important part in the career of Lord Beaconsfield. This lends interest to the following passage :—

"It was a rule with Stapylton Toad never to commit himself. Once, indeed, he wrote an able pamphlet on the Corn Laws, *which excited the dire indignation of the Political Economy Club. But Stapylton cared little for their subtle confutations and their loudly expressed contempt. He had obliged the country gentlemen of England, and ensured the return, at the next election, of Lord Mounteney's brother for the county.*"*

We have next a description of the meeting at which Vivian Grey proposes the formation of the Carabas party.

"When the blood of the party was tolerably warmed, Vivian addressed them. The tenor of his oration may be imagined. He developed the new political principles, demonstrated the mistake under the baneful influence of which they had so long suffered ; *promised them place, and power, and patronage, and personal consideration, if they would only act on the principles which he recommended*, in the most flowing language and the most melodious voice in which the glories of ambition were ever yet chanted. There was a buzz of admiration when the flattering music ceased; the Marquess smiled triumphantly, as if to say, 'Didn't I tell you he was a monstrous clever fellow?' and the whole business

* *Ibid.* 67.

seemed settled. Lord Courtown gave in a bumper, '*Mr. Vivian Grey, and success to his maiden speech!*'" —oh, irony of events!—"and Vivian replied by proposing '*The New Union.*'" *

Vivian Grey is supposed by three of the four political confederates to be able to take the place of leader in the House of Commons. What a prodigious youth of twenty-one! But he modestly proposes another —a Mr. Cleveland, who, betrayed by some political associates, has retired, disgusted, into private life. Vivian is sent on a mission to Cleveland, and is by him plainly told that he is the mere dupe and tool of the Marquess of Carabas.

"'*Of all the delusions*," says Cleveland, at a period subsequent to this first interview, "*which flourish in this mad world, the delusions of that man is most frantic who voluntarily, and of his own accord, supports the interests of a party. . . .* They will cheer your successful exertions, and then smile at your youthful zeal; or, crossing themselves for the unexpected succour, be too cowardly to reward their unexpected champion. *No, Grey; make them fear you, and they will kiss your feet. There is no act of treachery or meanness of which a political party is not capable; for in politics there is no honour.*'" †

A lady, named Mrs. Felix Lorraine, plays an important part in the book. She is a clever, designing, unscrupulous, and vicious woman; and sometimes

* *Ibid.* 85. The italics are Lord Beaconsfield's.

† *Ibid.* 136-7.

aids and sometimes thwarts the plans of Vivian Grey. At length, however, she becomes his implacable enemy, and makes an attempt to poison him. This attempt gives rise to the following frank piece of self-examination on the part of Vivian Grey:—

"I once imagined that I was using this woman for my purpose. Is it possible that aught of good can come to one who is forced to make use of such evil instruments as these? A horrible thought sometimes comes over my spirit. I fancy that in this mysterious foreigner, that in this woman I have met a kind of double of myself. The same wonderful knowledge of the human mind, the same sweetness of voice, the same miraculous management which has brought us both under the same roof; yet do I find her the most abandoned of all beings; a creature guilty of that which, even in this guilty age, I thought was obsolete. . . . . In seeking the Marquess, I was unquestionably impelled by a mere feeling of self-interest; but I have advised him to no course of action in which his welfare is not equally consulted with my own. . . . But am I entitled, I, who can lose nothing, am I entitled to play with other men's fortunes? Am I all this time deceiving myself with some wretched sophistry? *Am I, then, an intellectual Don Juan, reckless of human minds, as he was of human bodies; a spiritual libertine?*"*

A scene, in which Vivian Grey avenges himself on his enemy, is afterwards described with sickening

* *Ibid.* 105-6.

gusto. He attacks Mrs. Lorraine in what he knows to be her tenderest points with an ingenuity that is almost terrible; and thus the effect is described:—

"She threw herself on the sofa; her voice was choked with the convulsions of her passion, and she writhed in fearful agony. Vivian Grey lounging in an arm-chair in the easiest of postures, and with a face brilliant with smiles, watched his victim with the eye of a Mephistopheles. . . . . One large vein protruded nearly a quarter of an inch from her forehead. And the dank light which gleamed in her tearful eye was like an unwholesome meteor quivering in a marsh. When he ended she sprang from the sofa, and, looking up and extending her arms with unmeaning wildness, she gave one loud shriek and dropped like a bird shot on the wing; she had burst a blood-vessel. . . . . *Had Vivian Grey left the boudoir a pledged bridegroom his countenance could not have been more triumphant.*" *

A scene by moonlight between these two beings, before they have finally quarrelled, is worth quoting.

"'Superior spirits! say you?'" and here they paced the gallery. 'When Valerian, first Lord Carabas, raised this fair castle; when, profuse for his posterity, all the genius of Italian art and Italian artists was lavished on this English palace; when the stuffs and statues, the marbles and mirrors, the tapestry, and the carvings, and the paintings of Genoa, and Florence, and Venice, and Padua, and Vicenza, were obtained by him at miraculous cost, and with

* *Ibid.* 153-4.

still more miraculous toil; what think you would have been his sensations if, while his soul was revelling in the futurity of his descendants keeping their state in this splendid pile, some wizard had foretold to him that, ere three centuries could elapse, the fortunes of his mighty family would be the sport of two individuals; one of them a foreigner, unconnected in blood, or connected only in hatred; *and the other, a young adventurer alike unconnected with his race, in blood or in love; a being ruling all things by the power of his own genius, and reckless of all consequences save his own prosperity?* If the future had been revealed to my great ancestor, the Lord Valerian, think you, Vivian Grey, that you and I should be walking in this long gallery?' . . . .

"And here she grasped Vivian with a feverish hand. 'Omnipotent and ineffable essence! . . . . Miserable mocker! It is not true, Vivian Grey; you are but echoing the world's deceit, and even at this hour of the night you dare not speak as you do think. You worship no omnipotent and ineffable essence; you believe in no omnipotent and ineffable essence. Shrined in the secret chamber of your soul there is an image before which you bow down in adoration, and that image is YOURSELF. And truly, when I do gaze upon your radiant eyes,' and here the lady's tone became more terrestrial; 'and truly, when I do look upon your luxuriant curls,'* and here the

* Is not Mr. Disraeli's description of Vivian Grey very like Mr. Willis's description of Mr. Disraeli?

lady's small white hand played like lightning through Vivian's dark hair; 'and truly, when I do remember the beauty of your all-perfect form, I cannot deem your self-worship a false idolatry,' and here the lady's arms were locked round Vivian's neck, and her head rested on his bosom."

Vivian Grey is, in the end, defeated by Mrs. Lorraine. The Marquess of Carabas, foiled in his schemes, turns him from his doors, and he is challenged by Cleveland. In the duel, Cleveland is killed, and Vivian Grey rushes away on a foreign tour to drown his grief. The second part of the book describes the hero's adventures on the Continent, but that part of the story I have not time to notice.

Such, then, is Vivian Grey.†

Now, at the very outset of this work, I frankly tell the reader the thesis I attempt to prove. My

* *Ibid.* 112-13.

† I must dismiss briefly, and in the obscurity of a note, some of Lord Beaconsfield's earlier productions. The "Rise of Iskander" describes the revolt of a Christian against Mohammedan rule with as much apparent sympathy at that of the Jew "Alroy" against the same oppression. It is a short, picturesque, brisk narrative. "Ixion in Heaven," and the "Infernal Marriage," are burlesques, in which, after a fashion novel in Lord Beaconsfield's youth, but commonplace in ours, the heathen divinities are introduced, and, in professing to describe celestial manners, the author lashes modern foibles. These two sketches are little known; but they are among the best things Lord Beaconsfield has written. The wit is effective, and often brilliant; and the more ambitious passages are picturesque without being tawdry. The simple and chaste style of some of Lord Beaconsfield's earlier works, indeed, curiously enough, contrast favourably with the pretentiousness and bathos of some of his maturer creations.

view of Lord Beaconsfield's character is that it is essentially a counterpart of that of Vivian Grey; and my view of Lord Beaconsfield's political career is that it has been conducted upon the same arts as are practised by the hero of his earliest story. I shall give the reader abundant opportunity of seeing whether this estimate be correct or not. I will endeavour to maintain, so far as possible, throughout my narrative, the parallel between the two careers. The reader has just traced the life of Vivian Grey. Let us now resume our record of the life of Lord Beaconsfield.

CHAPTER III.

THE FIRST ELECTION.

Up to this time we find the young Disraeli still wavering between a political and a literary career, though unmistakably prepossessed in favour of the former mode of life. The events of 1832, however, brought these doubts to an end. The agitation for Reform swept like a storm over the land: the Crown, the House of Lords, the House of Commons as it was then constituted,—all existing institutions seemed for a while endangered, and there was that uneasiness and excitement in the public mind which presage and sometimes prepare a revolution. In such moments, politics become, of course, the paramount subject of interest. Amid exciting realities, people turn away with impatience from the tamer sensations of the romance; and the public have no ears for any poet's lute, save only when it gives voice to their passions. The hour was not favourable to literature; and young Disraeli—as he has so often told us already—was not the man to play to an inattentive audience.

An accidental circumstance, besides, drew him, if he still had any hesitation, into an active career. His father had some years before this taken Bradenham House, in Bucks; and, in the midst of all this Reform whirlwind, a vacancy arose in a borough close by.

High Wycombe, or Chipping Wycombe, as it is sometimes called, was, when young Disraeli first sought its representation, a constituency of the good old kind. Inside the parish, which was 6,318 acres in extent, was the municipal borough, the area of which was but 128 acres.* This area of 128 acres was represented in Parliament by two Members, and these two Members were elected exclusively by the corporation and burgesses of the town.

High Wycombe had for many years been represented by the Hon. Robert Smith and Sir Thomas Baring, both staunch Liberals.

In April or May of 1832, there began to be rumours of a vacancy in one of the seats. The report was first circulated, then denied; and finally it was announced that Sir Thomas Baring had determined to leave High Wycombe in order to contest Hants. Young Disraeli put himself forward as a candidate for the vacant place.

In order to make clear the contest which ensued, I must say a few words on the state of political parties at this period. The Ministry of Earl Grey was in power; and had just passed, after many delays and stupendous obstacles, the first Reform Bill. The

* Sheahan's "History of Buckinghamshire," 917—919.

Government, however, though it had performed this splendid service, was still unpopular with a large section of its followers. The division which always exists, either latently or in open expression, between the Whig, or moderate, and the more advanced section of the Liberal party, was both wide and very bitter at this period. Lord Grey, the Premier, was an aristocrat of aristocrats; had solemnly pledged himself to "stand by his order;" and abhorred Radicalism as strongly as any Tory. The first point of difference between the two sections was as to the exact way in which the Reform Act should be regarded. In the eyes of Lord Grey and his supporters, it was to be considered as a final measure. To their imaginations, the Liberal party had now, at last, reached the land of promise; and its only business was to "rest and be thankful."

The more advanced Liberals took a very different view. In their eyes, the Reform Act was but one step on the road of progress. The State was still worm-eaten by many evils. There was need for a reform of the Corporations; the franchise ought to be further lowered; the voter ought to be protected by the ballot; and the duration of Parliaments should be made shorter. And there was another point on which the difference between the two Liberal sections was aggravated by personal considerations. In those days, a monstrous proportion of the revenues of the State went into the hands of sinecurists, and the abolition of this public burden appeared to the more earnest

Liberals one of the most crying wants of the time. But very different were the feelings of Lord Grey; for even in that period of lavishly bestowed ministerial favours, he was notorious for his liberal, if not shameless, indulgence in the arts of nepotism. The result of all this was that the more advanced Liberals entertained feelings of bitter hostility against Whigs in general, and still more rancorous sentiments against the particular Whigs then in office.

Two things, finally, must be remembered in reading the accounts of the elections of 1832. The word "Radical" had not at that time become a part of our regular political vocabulary; "Reformer" is the term by which what we call a Radical was then known. Secondly, the "Reformer," though he differed from the existing Liberal Ministry, was none the less a Liberal; and was no more to be considered a Tory than is Sir Charles Dilke or Mr. Chamberlain, in our day, because occasionally they may think the pace of Lord Hartington too slow, and may doubt the infallible efficacy of Whig nostrums.

In several constituencies, then, the electors had their choice of three candidates. Besides the Tory and the Whig, there was the Reformer, or Radical. And in several boroughs—such was the bitterness of feeling—the Reformers ran a candidate of their own colour against a relative of one of the Ministers. Two of those Radical candidatures are of especial interest to us in these days. The one is that of Mr. Roebuck, at Bath; the other that of Mr.

Disraeli, at Wycombe. At Bath, Mr. Roebuck opposed Mr. Hobhouse, brother of Sir John Cam Hobhouse, then Minister for War; at Wycombe, the opponent of Mr. Disraeli was Colonel Grey, the third son of the Premier. Mr. Roebuck, like Mr. Disraeli, stood as a Reformer; and in the case of both one the other, Mr. Joseph Hume was the chief sponsor with the electors. Mr. Hume wrote a strong letter in favour of Mr. Disraeli.* But Mr. Disraeli was too energetic a man to be satisfied with a single letter of recommendation. Daniel O'Connell and Mr. Lytton Bulwer were then powerful in the Radical ranks,

* The following is the text of Mr. Hume's letter:—

"Bryanston Square, 2nd June, 1832.

"Sir,—As England can only reap the benefit of Reform by the electors doing their duty in selecting honest, independent, and talented men, I am much pleased to learn from our mutual friend, Mr. E. L. Bulwer, that you are about to offer yourself as a candidate to represent Wycombe in the New Parliament.

"I have no personal influence at that place, or I would use it immediately in your favour; but I should hope that the day has arrived when the electors will consider the qualifications of the candidates, and, in the exercise of their franchise, prove themselves worthy of the new rights they will obtain by the Reform.

"I hope the Reformers will rally round you, who entertain liberal opinions in every branch of government, and are prepared to pledge yourself to support reform and economy in every department as far as the same can be effected consistent with the best interests of the country.

"I shall only add that I shall be rejoiced to see you in the new Parliament, in the confidence that you will redeem your pledges and give satisfaction to your constituents if they will place you there.

"Wishing you success in your canvass,

I remain your obedient servant,

(Signed) "JOSEPH HUME.

"To — Disraeli, Esq."—(*Bucks Gazette*, June 9, 1832.)

and from both the one and the other he obtained notes of approval. He also succeeded in getting a few friendly lines from Sir Francis Burdett.*

* The following are copies of these letters in full :—

(From Edward Lytton-Bulwer, Esq., M.P., to B. D'Israeli, Esq.)

"June 3rd, 1832.

My dear Disraeli (*sic*),—I have received from my friend Mr. Hume a letter addressed to you, which I have forwarded to Bradenham. In case you should not receive it in such good time as may be wished, I may as well observe that in it Mr. Hume expresses his great great (*sic*) satisfaction at hearing that you are about to start for Wycombe, his high opinion of your talents and principles—and while he regrets he knows no one at Wycombe whom otherwise he would certainly endeavour to interest in your behalf, he avails himself of his high situation in public esteem to remind the electors of Wycombe that the Reform Bill is but a means to the end of good and cheap government, and that they ought to show themselves deserving of the results of that great measure by choosing Members of those talents and those principles which can alone advocate the popular cause, and which Mr. Hume joins with me in believing you so eminently possess.

"You will receive his letter at latest on Tuesday morning, and so anxious was he in your behalf that he would not leave London, though on matters of urgent private business, until he had written it.

"Assuring you of my cordial wishes, which, I trust, may be shared by all true reformers,

"Believe me, my dear D'Israeli, truly yours,

"E. Lytton-Bulwer,

"M.P. for St. Ives."

(From Daniel O'Connell, Esq., to Edward Lytton-Bulwer, Esq., M.P.)

"Parliament Street, June 3rd, 1832.

"My dear Sir,—In reply to your inquiry, I regret to say that I have no acquaintance at Wycombe to whom I could recommend Mr. D'Israeli. It grieves me, therefore, to be unable to serve him on his canvass. I am as convinced as you are of the great advantage the cause of genuine Reform would obtain from his return. His readiness to carry the Reform Bill into practical effect towards the production of cheap government and free institutions is enhanced by the talent and information which he brings to the good cause. I should certainly express full reliance on his political and personal

Two somewhat untoward circumstances, however, intervened to spoil to some extent the effect of these recommendations. Mr. Joseph Hume, either suspecting the genuineness of Mr. Disraeli, or perhaps—for all the facts of the case are not quite clear—imagining that he had prematurely interfered, partially withdrew his first letter.* The second circumstance rather hostile

integrity, and it would give me the greatest pleasure to assist in any way in procuring his return, but that, as I have told you, I have no claim on Wycombe, and can only express my surprise that it should be thought I had any.

"I have the honour to be,

"My dear Sir, yours very faithfully,

"DANIEL O'CONNELL."

—*Ibid.*

* It will be remembered that it was uncertain for some time whether Sir Thomas Baring really intended to resign or not. Mr. Hume's first letter was probably written when the rumour of the vacancy got abroad. The second refers in all likelihood to the period when the report was still denied, and had not been confirmed by the resignation of Sir Thomas Baring. This is the text:—

"Bryanston Square, June 6th, 1832.

"Dear Sirs,—A handbill has just been put into my hands, containing an abstract of a letter of mine sent to Mr. B. D'Israeli, in which I express my hopes that, as a reformer, I should be happy to see him a Member of the new Parliament; but, at the same time I wrote that letter, I was not aware that he would come in opposition to either of you, to disturb you in your present seats, and I feel concerned that I should in any way, by my statement in favour of Mr. D'Israeli, have tended to disturb the seats of two gentlemen with whom, for so many years, I have had the pleasure to sit in Parliament. I am anxious to state to you that it would really give me considerable pain to have inadvertently done anything to weaken the confidence which your constituents ought to have in you both, who have, for so many years, supported Liberal measures, and in particular during the last eighteen months, given such important support to the cause of Reform, now near its completion.

"I have this day written to Mr. D'Israeli, stating to him the cause of the mistake by which my name has been used against you, and

to Mr. Disraeli's success with the Liberal electors was that he was mercilessly assailed by the Liberal,* and as strongly supported by the Tory,† organ.

Between the abilities of the two candidates no attempt at comparison was made. Colonel Grey, at that period of his career at all events, was not a speaker. He himself, on the day of his first appearance in the town, declared with great *naïveté* that this was the first time he had ever addressed a public meeting, and craved indulgence. This ample admission allows us to form a sufficiently humble estimate of the natural abilities of the gallant Colonel, though perhaps it did not justify the Tory organ in declaring that "a more perfect simpleton" never sought the representation of a constituency.

expressing my hope that he will not attempt to disturb the seats of two gentlemen who have given their aids to bring about that Reform for which the country has so long been in need.

"Hoping that you may neither of you suffer any inconvenience by the manner in which my name has been used,

"I remain, your obedient servant,

"JOSEPH HUME.

"To the Hon. Robert Smith, M.P., and
Sir Thomas Baring, Bart., M.P."—*Ibid.*

* "He intruded himself on the borough," said the *Bucks Gazette* decisively, "as a Reformer, but the electors saw reason to suspect that he was an impostor."—*Ibid.* June 30, 1832.

† "We do not," wrote the *Bucks Herald* (June 16, 1832), "concur politically with either of the gentlemen, but we prefer most decidedly the independent and manly declaration of Mr. Disraeli to the puling protestations of Colonel Grey. Mr. Disraeli, moreover, is not a Whig. He is an independent, not tied to party, but, having talents and self-dependence, may cut out for himself a career of honour and distinction in the Senate which the Colonel cannot hope to aspire to. We weigh fairly the merits of the two, and the scale preponderates towards Mr. Disraeli most powerfully."

On the 13th of June the candidates made their public entry into the town. Colonel Grey stumbled through a short speech, winding up with the frank admission already quotod.

But not so Mr. Disraeli. He entered the town in an open carriage, drawn by four horses, and he was accompanied in his march by a crowd of admirers. This crowd was, either spontaneously or by arrangement, joined by another a mile outside the town, and so, escorted by a band, banners, and a troop of admirers, Mr. Disraeli made his triumphal appearance. "The candidate," wrote our contemporary and malicious chronicler of Mr. Disraeli at this great moment of his career—"the candidate . . . . kissed his hand or blew kisses, we cannot say which, to all the females who were at the windows, bowing profoundly at times to his friends." *

Mr. Disraeli's next act was equally characteristic. The "Red Lion" was then the chief hostelry of the town, and the "Red Lion" had a porch before the door. Mr. Disraeli perched himself on the roof of this porch, and, in this commanding position, could be seen and heard by any crowd, however large. For a whole hour, at least, did the future Premier then pour forth his rhetoric, and, from the reports, meagre as they are, which come down to us, it is evident that in those days Mr. Disraeli was the model of a mob orator. A mob, above all things, likes hard blows and broad jokes, and Mr. Disraeli, in this speech

* *Bucks Gazette*, June 16, 1832.

castigated the Whigs alternately with the bitterest vehemence and the broadest sarcasm. And all this was done with an energy and animation that must have been very effective.*

We have already seen that appearance was a matter to which Mr. Disraeli evidently paid a great deal of attention; and that other people repaid this, by founding their admiration or contempt for his abilities and character to some extent on their impressions of his exterior. The Liberal journal of the district, at all events, found a most convincing proof of Mr. Disraeli's unworthiness in his appearance.†

The nomination took place on the 26th June, and naturally excited Wycombe to its shallow depths. The occasion, apart altogether from the character of the candidates, was deeply interesting. On Thursday, June 7,—that is, about three weeks before this day,

* The estimates formed of the speech by the Liberal and the Tory journals, amid apparent difference, agree on the whole. "After this harlequinade," writes the chronicler already alluded to, "had been performed,"—meaning the kissing of hands, etc.,—"Mr. Disraeli addressed the populace . . . . . and, in a speech of some ability and much gesticulation, amused the gaping throng for a little more than an hour." "Mr. Disraeli," said the Tory journal, "concluded a speech replete with talent, delivered with great energy, and producing a powerful effect."

† Having first characterised Mr. Disraeli as an "Adonis of the sable cheek," he "challenges attention to himself," continues the *Bucks Gazette*, "by adorning his wrists with cambric, his bosom with lace;" he "puts a blue band round his hat, when the vulgar wears a black one;" he "carries a black cane with a gold head;" his "coat is lined with pink silk," and "before he essays to speak on the hustings," he "formally adjusts his ringlets," whose "duty is assigned them on his brow." "Such a man,"—and here we must apologise for the indecorous language of our authority—"such a

—the Reform Bill had received the Royal assent. The Act had not yet come into operation; but this was at all events the last election under the old form.

The Mayor and Corporation, who had so long enjoyed the exclusive right of election, were about to exercise their power for the last time, and the townsfolk were about to witness the last scene in the oligarchical rule, which had been abolished for ever.

Mr. Disraeli's speech was just such as one might expect from a Radical candidate; and many of its passages are paraphrases of the sentences in some of the letters of recommendation which he had presented from the Radical leaders.

The Radicals or Reformers, as I have said, complained of the existence of sinecures, and of the nepotism of the Premier. Mr. Disraeli said that "he had never received one shilling of public money," and that "he belonged to a family who never had." Then he spoke of the Reform Act, in almost the very words of Daniel O'Connell and Joseph Hume. He regarded it as "a means to a great end;" and, finally, he made the

man—we had said, such a popinjay—appears to deliver himself something as follows: 'Look on my antagonist, and look on me. See him, plain in his attire, plain in his speech. Behold me; will you not vote for a person of my blandishments? and the author of the novel?'" "The short fact is," says the same unfriendly critic, "that he is as artificial a speaker as he is a reformer; that his novel—his 'Vivian Grey'—is as meretricious as are the ornaments with which he bedizens himself."—June 30, 1832.

truly Radical boast that he was "sprung from the people," and had "none of the blood of the Plantagenets or Tudors in his veins."

One other point in this memorable speech is worth notice. It has already been seen that the Radical candidate, as is so often the case, received a certain amount of Tory support. The plain reason of this circumstance, on the present occasion, has been stated in a passage of the Tory organ already quoted. It was not that the Tories loved Liberalism more, but that they hated Radicalism less than Whiggery. The explanation which Mr. Disraeli gives is pretty much the same. "The support he received from the Tories," he said, "was easily to be accounted for. The people supported him first, and the Tories, finding that it was useless to attempt to check their wishes, resolved to promote a general feeling of friendliness. It was to this he owed the support of his friends the Tories, and he trusted this union would be lasting. It would be, for the Tories must now lean on them: they need not lean on the Tories."

However, neither the support of the Radicals nor of the Tories was of any avail. Let me not spoil, by interpolating a word of my own, the splendid though unconscious humour of the paragraph in which the paper of the period announces the result of the election:—

"The polling then commenced. At about five o'clock Mr. Disraeli retired. The poll at the close

was—Grey, 23; Disraeli, 12; majority, 11. Mr. Disraeli says in a bill that he had a majority of resident voters, but the numbers were—Grey, residents, 11; Disraeli, 7; majority, 4. There were two more to poll in the Grey interest."*

* *Bucks Gazette*, June 30, 1832. The same journal, in the same issue, also says Mr. Disraeli's "principal supporters were the Radicals."

CHAPTER IV.

THE SECOND ELECTION AT WYCOMBE.

Mr. Disraeli received his defeat at High Wycombe with neither patience nor despair.

Immediately after the declaration of the poll, he again ascended the rostrum, and again delivered a lengthy speech. In those days of hard hitting, no man, perhaps, had much chance of prominence in the political arena without using strong language. Mr. Disraeli, at all events, had determined at a very early stage in his career that the bitterness of his tongue should be one of his principal means of success.

Some of the assertions made in this speech afforded subject for a controversy between Mr. Disraeli and his opponent in the interval between the first and second elections. Of these things, however, there is but one which interests us nowadays. In a speech to his constituents in December, Colonel Grey accused Mr. Disraeli of having made use of the words,

"The Whigs have cast me off, and they shall repent it."

Mr. Disraeli at once replied in a letter to the *Times*.* "Whatever," he wrote, "may be the disposition of the Whigs to me, they never could have cast me off, since I never had the slightest connection with them. I believe that the phrase I did use, and I am sanctioned in my recollection by every person to whom I have applied, was the following: 'The Whigs had opposed me, not I them, and they shall repent it.' I am in nowise ashamed of this observation, and I adhere to my intention."

Parliament was dissolved on August 16, and Mr. Disraeli resolved to seek a second time the suffrages of the Wycombe electors. On the 5th of October appears in the *Times* the first election address of Lord Beaconsfield which I am able anywhere to find.

"I come forward," says Mr. Disraeli in this address, "wearing the badge of no party, and the livery of no faction." But he goes on to add that he has no desire to "escape an explicit avowal" of his opinions. Then he expresses himself in favour of vote by ballot, triennial Parliaments, and retrenchment of the public expenditure. After a violent attack on the Ministry, the address winds up with an appeal to the constituency to rid themselves of all "that political jargon and factious slang of Whig and Tory—two names," proceeds Mr. Disraeli, "with one meaning,

* *Times*, Nov. 11, 1832.

used only to delude you,—and unite in forming a great national party, which can alone save the country from impending destruction." *

* This is the address in full :—

"TO THE INDEPENDENT ELECTORS OF THE BOROUGH OF CHIPPING WYCOMBE.

"Friends and Neighbours,—

"A dissolution of Parliament, notwithstanding the machinations of those who have clogged the new charter of your rights which you have won with so much difficulty, with all the vexatious provisoes of a fiscal enactment, being an event which cannot be much longer delayed, I think fit to announce my readiness to redeem the pledge which I made to you at the close of the late contest on the hustings of our borough, and to assure you of my resolution to go to the poll to make another, and, I doubt not, triumphant struggle for your independence.

"I warned our late masters of the dangerous precedent of electing a stranger merely because he was the relative of a Minister. I ore-told, as a consequence of their compliance, a system of nomination as fatal as those close corporations of which you are relieved. The event has justified my prediction. Wycombe has now the honour of being represented by the private secretary of the First Lord of the Treasury.

"A few years back, Aylesbury was threatened with the private secretary of the Lord Chancellor. The men of Aylesbury rejected with loathing that which, it appears, suited the more docile digestion of the late electors of Wycombe. The private secretary of the Lord Chancellor was withdrawn, and in his place was substituted an unknown youth, whose only recommendation is that he is the very young brother of a very inexperienced Minister, and one who has obtained power merely by the renunciation of every pledge which procured him an entrance into public life.

"Gentlemen, I come forward to oppose this disgusting system of factious and intrusive nomination, which, if successful, must be fatal to your local independence; and which, if extensively acted upon throughout the country, may even be destructive of your general liberties. I come forward wearing the badge of no party, and the livery of no faction. I seek your suffrages as an independent neighbour, who, sympathising with your wants and interests, will exercise his utmost influence in the great national council to relieve the one and support the other.

At a public meeting given to him by his supporters, Mr. Disraeli elaborated the opinions which he had expressed in the address. This speech is a really memorable one: delivered at a petty dinner in a

"But, while I am desirous of entering Parliament as an independent man, I have never availed myself of that much-abused epithet to escape an explicit avowal of my opinions. I am desirous of assisting in the machinery of our new constitution, without which perfection I am doubtful whether it will work. I am prepared to support that ballot which will preserve us from that unprincipled system of terrorism with which it would seem we are threatened even in this town.

"I am desirous of recurring to those old English triennial Parliaments of which the Whigs originally deprived us, and, by repealing the taxes upon knowledge, I would throw the education of the people into the hands of the philosophic student, instead of the ignorant adventurer.

"Although I shall feel it my duty to enforce on all opportunities the most rigid economy, and the most severe retrenchment, to destroy every useless place and every undeserving office, and to effect the greatest reduction of taxation consistent with the maintenance of the public faith and the real efficiency of the Government, I shall withhold my support from every Ministry which will not originate some great measure to ameliorate the condition of the lower orders—to rouse the dormant energies of the country, to liberate our shackled industry, and reinstate our expiring credit.

"I have already expressed my willingness to assist in the modification of our criminal code. I have already explained how I think the abolition of slavery may be safely and speedily effected. With regard to the Corn Laws, I will support any change the basis of which is to relieve the customer without injuring the farmer; and for the Church, I am desirous of seeing effected some commutation which, while it prevents the tithe from acting as a tax on industry and enterprise, will again render the clergy what I am always desirous of seeing them, fairly remunerated, because they are valuable and efficient labourers, and influential, because they are beloved.

"And now I call upon every man who values the independence of our borough, upon every man who desires the good government of this once great and happy country; upon every man who feels he has a better chance of being faithfully served by a Member who is his neighbour, than by a remote representative, who, like the idle

small town almost half a century ago, and when Mr. Disraeli was an unknown political stripling, it yet follows exactly the same lines of thought as addresses delivered by Lord Beaconsfield at immense Conservative gatherings in the full maturity of his years, and after his full harvest of honours. The leading theme is that the Tories of the last century were the real friends, and the Whigs the real enemies, of political reform. And in connection with this theme are mentioned the names of two Tory leaders, whose authority has been since quoted by Lord Beaconsfield in support of the same views, at least hundreds of times, and in a dozen different shapes.

wind no man regardeth, comes one day we know not whence, and goes the next we know not whither,—to support me in this struggle against that rapacious, tyrannical, and incapable faction, who, having knavishly obtained power by false pretences, sillily suppose that they will be permitted to retain it by half measures, and who, in the course of their brief but disastrous career, have contrived to shake every great interest of the empire to its centre.

"Ireland in rebellion, the colonies in convulsion, our foreign relations in a state of such inextricable confusion, that we are told that war alone can sever the Gordian knot of complicated blunders; the farmer in doubt, the shipowners in despair, our merchants without trade, and our manufacturers without markets, the revenue declining, and the army increased, the wealthy hoarding their useless capital, and pauperism prostrate in our once-contented cottages. Englishmen, behold the unparalleled empire raised by the heroic energies of your fathers; rouse yourselves in the hour of doubt and danger; rid yourselves of all that political jargon and factious slang of Whig and Tory—two names with one meaning, used only to delude you,—and unite in forming a great national party which can alone save the country from impending destruction.

"I have the honour to remain,

"Your obliged and devoted servant,

"B. DISRAELI.

"Bradenham House, Oct. 1st, 1832."

These two men are Sir William Wyndham and Lord Bolingbroke.

This speech is also remarkable as showing the first change of political front. At the election in June, Mr. Disraeli stood as a Radical pure and simple; and whatever support he got from the Tories, he then represented as simply the result of the Tory sense of the necessity of seeking Radical aid. But at this second election we have quite a different tone. All the Radical dogmas—triennial Parliaments, vote by ballot, abolition of the taxes on knowledge—are still strongly advocated, but, at the same time, the Tory, with his eyes open, is allowed to see short, slight glimpses of a Tory leaven in Mr. Disraeli's Radicalism.*

The nomination took place on the 10th December. There were three candidates for the two seats. Mr. Smith, afterwards the second Lord Carington, who had held the seat for many years, and was Lord of the Manor, was considered certain of success; and the real contest accordingly again lay between Colonel Grey and Mr. Disraeli. I would willingly pause over Mr. Disraeli's speech on this occasion; but I am able to glance at but one or two of its points.

* "Now I," he says in this speech, "who am cried down and branded as a destructive Radical, only advocate what Sir William Wyndham, the Tory champion, sought to recover, as an act of justice to the people—as an essential point in the well-being of the constitution. Lord Bolingbroke, one of the ablest men that ever lived—(cheers)—was a firm and uncompromising Tory, and advocated Triennial Parliaments." And in another passage he speaks of himself as "a Conservative to preserve all that is good in our constitution, a Radical to remove all that is bad."—*Bucks Herald.*

There is a possible misapprehension with regard to the political character in which Mr. Disraeli appeared at these elections, against which I have already cautioned the reader; but it is a point to which, as will afterwards be seen, it is necessary to recur again and again. That misapprehension is that, because Mr. Disraeli abused the Whigs, he is on that account not to be considered a Liberal. I have stated that this very attitude towards Whiggery must be taken in his case at that time as it would be taken in the case of men like Sir Charles Dilke or Mr. Chamberlain in our days: that is to say, as proof of the more than ordinary intensity of his Liberalism. In confirmation of this contention, I point to the fact, familiar to everybody acquainted with our political condition in 1832, that in the speeches of such unquestioned Liberals as Joseph Hume, Daniel O'Connell, and Mr. J. A. Roebuck, and in the writings of such equally staunch Liberals as James and John Mill and Albany Fonblanque, there is abuse of Whigs and Whiggery quite as vehement as any in the speeches of Mr. Disraeli at Wycombe.

But the strongest proof that Mr. Disraeli meant his abuse of the Whigs to pass for intensity of Liberalism is to be found in Mr. Disraeli's own utterances. I have already pointed out this in commenting on the first Wycombe election. Now let me take an extract or two on the same point from this speech in the election of December.

"He was objected to," said Mr. Disraeli, according

to the report in the local paper,* "by the gallant colonel who nominated Colonel Grey (Colonel Bristow), because of his alliance with the Tories: he would object to the gallant colonel because of his alliance with the Whigs; and the Tories had tendered him their support, and if they were inclined to serve the purposes of the people, and help them to obtain their object, would he, as a friend of the people, be justified in rejecting their aid? (Cheers and continued hooting.)"

This passage, I think, indisputably means that if the Tories supported him, that was their affair; it was not that he was the less a Liberal. But there is a still more remarkable passage—I am still quoting from the same report:—

"He charged the Whigs with having violated, in his case, a solemn pledge never to oppose a Reformer. He had been assured by his friends in London that that this was the principle on which the Whigs acted. When, therefore, Colonel Grey offered himself, he instantly went to London and got a personal friend of his to wait on one of Colonel Grey's relatives. The reply was that he (Mr. Disraeli) had no chance of being elected, and if Colonel Grey did not offer, a Tory would come in."

And, finally, the speech wound up with an indictment of the Whigs for their treatment of Mr. Joseph Hume; and mark the manner in which Mr. Disraeli points this charge:—

* *Bucks Gazette*, Dec. 15, 1832.

"The orator next drew a parallel between the case of Mr. Hume and that of Burke, who, having helped the Whigs to power, found himself rejected by them because he was no part of the high aristocracy. The secret of the enmity of the Whigs to himself was that he was not nobly born."

We now see clearly what was the nature of Mr. Disraeli's hate of the Whigs. He hated them, not because they were Liberals, but because they were an aristocratic and selfish clique. That charge against the Whigs was brought in 1832, and has been brought many thousand times since by men whose Liberalism no one can gainsay; and that charge most Liberals will willingly admit to be true. And therefore Mr. Disraeli cannot escape from the fact that he stood for Wycombe in 1832 as an advanced Liberal, by pointing to his attacks on Whigs and Whiggery.

The second Wycombe election ended, like the first, in Mr. Disraeli's defeat. Nothing daunted, however, and determined, if he could not have election, to at least have notoriety, he rushed across to the county nomination at Aylesbury, and in the noisy proceedings of the day took a characteristically noisy part.* And then, to call still more attention to the occasion, he wrote an indignant letter to the *Times*,† complaining of misrepresentation in the report of his implacable enemy—the *Bucks Gazette*.

We have seen that Mr. Disraeli of June 1832, and Mr. Disraeli of December in the same year, are just a

* *Ibid.* Dec. 22, 1832. † Dec. 27, 1832.

little different. At the first Wycombe election, he is the Radical pure and simple; at the second, he can go so far as to tolerate Tories. We now follow him to a metropolitan stage, and here we shall find that he appears once again as the Radical, pure and undisguised.

In the early part of 1833, a vacancy was expected in Marylebone, and Mr. Disraeli issued an address, which is purely Radical if ever such a thing as a Radical address was published. He is in favour of triennial Parliaments, vote by ballot, and the abolition of taxes on knowledge. But not satisfied with proclaiming himself the adherent of the two principles which were then the distinctive and prominent badges of the Radical party, Mr. Disraeli pledges himself to minor articles also of the Radical gospel. He talks of himself as one "of a family untainted by the receipt of public money," and an attack on the pension list was daily made by the Radicals; and an announcement of himself as unsupported by either of "the *aristocratic* parties" was evidently a sop to the levelling tendency supposed to reside in Radicalism.

But he does even more than this. "Believing," he says in this address, "that unless the public burdens are speedily and materially reduced, a civil convulsion must occur"—Lord Beaconsfield has been always fond of prophesying the most dire consequences from the neglect of his counsels—"I am desirous of seeing a Parliamentary Committee appointed to revise the entire *system of our taxation*

with the object of relieving industry form those encumbrances which property is more capacitated to endure." Thus Mr. Disraeli joins in the cry for a land-tax—a cry distinctive even more than vote by ballot and triennial Parliaments of the Radical party.

Assuredly the proposition that a land-tax is a Radical, and not a Conservative proposal, requires no proof. But the time and place selected for the statement of a political opinion are also of importance. It is one thing to pronounce an opinion on a question which belongs to the distant future, and another thing to pronounce an opinion on a question which is at the moment dividing parties. Now the property tax was at the moment of Mr. Disraeli's address a *question of the hour*. The address is dated April 9, 1833. On February 18 of that same year—that is, less than two months before the issue of the address—Mr. Cobbett had proposed a series of resolutions in the House of Commons, the general intention of which was to transfer a considerable portion of the public burdens to the land.* And to these proposals O'Connell and Hume—who are still, it must be remarked, the leaders Mr. Disraeli swears allegiance to—gave a general support. On several occasions too during March—the month preceding the issue of the Marylebone address—Cobbett and Hume recurred to this idea of a property tax. It is, therefore, quite evident that a tax on property was the Radical cry of the hour, and

* Hansard, Feb. 18, 1832.

that, as a consequence, Mr. Disraeli sought election at Marylebone as a Radical of the most pronounced type.

The expected vacancy in Marylebone did not take place, and so Lord Beaconsfield was prevented from explaining on the hustings his political creed. However, he took another form of doing so. In his early years, if his tongue was at rest, his pen was sure to be at work.

He published a pamphlet, entitled "What is He?" Of the hundreds of candidates who had sought election since the passage of the Reform Bill, probably Lord Beaconsfield was the only one who thought it necessary to explain in pamphlet form the articles of his creed. But in failure as in success, whether his position were mean or exalted, as a stripling and as a septuagenarian, Lord Beaconsfield has acted as if the eyes of an admiring world were fixed upon him.

The title page of the pamphlet is worthy of the writer. "What is He? by the author of 'Vivian Grey,'" and underneath are the words—"I hear that . . . . . is again in the field. I don't know whether we ought to wish him success; 'What is he?'—*Extract from a letter of an eminent personage.*" The "eminent personage!"—what a characteristic phrase!—was understood to be Earl Grey, and thus the world was taught how deeply important the candidature of Mr. Disraeli appeared to the most influential politicians.

The tone of reasoning in "What is He?" is one with which the reader has already been made tolerably familiar.

Setting out with the statement that, before the passing of the Reform Bill, the Government of the country was established on an aristocratic principle, the writer declares that Government is now established on no principle at all. Searching for a principle, then, we are left to choose between a return to the aristocratic, or an advance to the democratic. "A Tory and a Radical," writes Lord Beaconsfield, "I understand; a Whig—a democratic aristocrat—I cannot comprehend. If the Tories indeed despair of restoring the aristocratic principle, and are sincere in the avowal that the State cannot be governed with the present machinery, *it is their duty to coalesce with the Radicals*, and permit both political nicknames to merge in the common, the intelligible, and the dignified title of a National party."* Here again, the reader sees, Lord Beaconsfield tells his Radical friends how they are to make use of the benighted Tories.

"What," asks the writer, "are the easiest and most obvious methods by which the democratic principle may be made predominant? *It would appear that the easiest and the most obvious methods are the instant repeal of the Septennial Act, the institution of election by ballot*, and the immediate dissolution of Parliament."†

"What is He?" is, it will be seen, a repetition of the programme of the second Wycombe election. A comparison between it and the Marylebone address shows the same change of front as occurred between

* New edition, 10-11. † *Ibid.* 13.

the elections of June and December of 1832. In the Marylebone address, as in the first election at Wycombe, Lord Beaconsfield is the Radical, pure and simple; and in the pamphlet, as at the second Wycombe election, he betrays an inclination to conciliate the Tories. The reader, however, ought to take note of the care with which, while even making these advances to the Tories, Lord Beaconsfield preserves the purity and rigour of his own Radicalism. He proposes a junction with the Tories, it is true; but to any of his Radical patrons who might object to this as inconsistent with his own Radical creed, he has a very ready answer. He proposes reconciliation of the Tories with the Radicals; but he proposes it on the truly Radical basis that the Tories shall surrender all their principles. Of course, when Mr. Disraeli was talking to the Conservatives, he gave his scheme a very different complexion.

The great principle and the great secret of Lord Beaconsfield's success has been to play on the meaner passions of men.

"Yes!" exclaimed Vivian Grey, "we must mix with the herd; we must enter into their feelings; we must humour their weaknesses; we must sympathise with the sorrows that we do not feel, and share the merriment of fools." And Lord Beaconsfield has fully acted up to these ideas. The three weaknesses on which he has played most frequently are the vanity of the aristocracy, the stupidity of the agriculturist, and the lunacy of the urban population. We have

seen his appeal to the more rabid doctrines of the dwellers in the town; in the next scene, he is discovered in the somewhat opposite part of bowing to the nobility and glorifying the farmer.

The scene of this second appearance is a dinner in the Town Hall at Aylesbury on December 17, 1834. Between this date and the Marylebone address an important change had come over the political world. The Ministry of Lord Grey, sunk to the last degree of impotence, had required recasting. Lord Melbourne, who succeeded Lord Grey, was not much more successful; towards the end of the year he was dismissed, and the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel were sent for.

Mr. Disraeli's game was quite clear in such a state of parties. In the first place, Toryism had approached the haven of office; and while a Tory may ally himself with Radicals to drive out the Whigs, such a union becomes unnecessary and dangerous when the Tories are "in." It was full time that Mr. Disraeli should abandon the dangerous creed of Radicalism.

At this period, too, there was a section of Sir Robert Peel's supporters who offered excellent material for Mr. Disraeli's arts. The rural districts were in a state of great distress. The landlords complained that they could get no rents, the farmers that they could get no profits, and the labourers, maddened by their misery, had committed wild outrages in several parts of the country.

In those days people had still a strong belief in the

omnipotence of Government, and everybody was convinced that "something should be done." It was not quite so easy to discover what that "something" should be. King's speech after King's speech alluded to agricultural distress, but Ministers could agree on no measure; and committees sat for months on the subject, and could agree on no report. But one thing was certain: the British farmer was more than ever convinced that he was the chief bulwark of the State, and that absolute ruin stared this bulwark in the face.

Thus the agriculturists—needy, exasperated, and bewildered—stood in need of a leader, bold, vehement of tongue, and clear of head; and they were, besides, the very best of parties for a young politician. They were Tories, for the most part, it is true; but they put forward claims that even a Tory Minister would find it difficult, if not impossible, to satisfy. The lead of a section of the party in power, which is excited, mutinous, and rather stupid,—could an ambitious youth ask more?

The party, besides, had at that moment its Marquess of Carabas, whose influence the uninfluential Vivian Grey could use, and whose mind the clever Vivian Grey could sway. The Marquis of Chandos had become, within the last few years, the leader of the agricultural party. The son of the Duke of Buckingham, an owner of wide estates, member for Mr. Disraeli's own county, influential in every Buckinghamshire constituency, the idol of the farmers,—

what better Marquess of Carabas could Vivian Grey find?

When, at length, a friendly Administration had come into power, the farmers raised their voices louder than before; and it was determined that the Administration should be told what they were expected to do.

In Bucks, the excitement was particularly intense. The rumour had gone abroad, and had actually been confirmed, that the Marquis of Chandos was to have no place in the new Administration. Alarming as this rumour was, the cause assigned was still more alarming, and deepened the dark suspicion that the friends of the farmers were about to play false to their promises. The Marquis of Chandos would not be a member of the Ministry, because the Ministry refused to promise the repeal of the malt tax!

The County Agricultural Association accordingly organised a great meeting, which was to warn Ministers against evil courses; and no means were spared to make the demonstration imposing.

The report of this dinner, at Aylesbury Town Hall, in the December of 1834, must be very pleasant reading nowadays to an enemy of our aristocracy. It is amusing to see the fatuous insolence of the Buckinghamshire magnates—their pomposity, their condescension, their belief in the eternity of their influence, and, above all things, their insulting patronage of the man who was at that moment using them as tools, and at this moment uses them as footstools.

The meeting developed into an apotheosis of the Marquis of Chandos. The Marquis of Chandos was mentioned in every speech; his name was proposed in three different toasts; the farmers hailed him at every possible moment with enthusiastic cheers; he spoke three different times.

Mark, too, how conscious son and father show themselves of their dignity! The Marquis of Chandos speaks of his father as "the noble Duke who presides in the chair;" as to say, "Vulgar folk, behold how even I bow before the ducal dignity of my sire!" And the Duke is no less conscious of the overwhelming importance of the child of his loins. "Can any man feel prouder than I am?" says the Duke in a burst of self-complacency; "surrounded by so many of my friends, I received your confidence, which was transmitted to me by those you loved, who went before me, which I have transmitted THERE."

"Here," says our gushing rural reporter, "his Grace pointed to Lord Chandos, and the cheering that followed was so long and loud as for a long time to interrupt the speech of the noble Duke."*

But where, amid all this self-gratulation, all this complacent chuckling of the aristocrats,—where is poor Mr. Disraeli? Apparently, he is not thought much of by these magnates; and his presence at this banquet is an incident of the most trifling importance. Indeed, I find in one of the reports that his name occupies the last place on the list of

Bucks Herald, Dec. 20, 1834.

those present; and from the newspaper accounts I am inclined to think he occupied a seat among the general ruck, and not on the Olympian height of the dais, where the *dii majores* of the meeting ate, drank, and orated.

Poor Mr. Disraeli! Toast after toast has been proposed, local magnate after magnate has spoken, and the time is gradually approaching when no toast will be left but "The Press," and "The Ladies," and still you have not had an opportunity of uttering a word.

What a picture Mr. Disraeli presents at this dinner to our eyes, enlightened by future events. How he loathes the gormandising farmers, among whom he is compelled to sit; with what eyes of envy and hate he looks up to the dais, on which the "quality" sit; how he sickens at the oft-repeated name of the heritor of the Duke's title and land; what are his feelings as he hears the tame sentences of this man, who, merely by his position, can call himself the leader of a parliamentary party, while he—Benjamin Disraeli, with the tongue of fire—the twice-rejected of Wycombe, has to sit below the salt, and listen to the foolish utterances of titled dullards.

Such must have been Mr. Disraeli's bitter thoughts; but when he rose to speak, his words were all honey and flattery; for Vivian Grey, we know, had "the tongue of a serpent." Proposed by a "Mr. John Rolfe, of Beaconsfield," as a gentleman "firmly attached to the cause of agriculture," he attempted

to justify this description by a eulogium of the agricultural interest, so wild as almost to read like burlesque. He states, among other things, that "He had long been of opinion that a conspiracy existed among certain orders in the county against what was styled the Agricultural interest." *

And again: "No nation could ever do without agriculture, and a peasantry attached to it; and as for the manufacturers of Birmingham and Manchester, they would, if it suited them at any time, migrate to Belgium, France, or Egypt. (Cheers.) The agriculturists had a spirit of patriotism," †—but I need give no more.

A number of stupid farmers, their stomachs well filled with meat and drink, of course wildly cheered these testimonies to their own supernal virtues; but assuredly any one with even the slightest sense of humour, or with an even less than ordinary degree of penetration, could hear underneath this exaggeration and flattery the tones of utter insincerity.

The farmers, however, were not the only persons who came in for the sweetnesses of the orator's tongue. I have already spoken of the part the Marquis of Chandos took in this meeting. Mr. Disraeli pays court to the great man with the deepest fervour. He speaks of his "distinguished talents;" his "unsullied parliamentary conduct;" and as Sir Robert Peel had not availed himself of these great mental gifts, and this lofty character, Mr. Disraeli

* *Ibid.* † *Ibid.*

for one "rather faltered in his confidence in the new Ministry." "Ought it be said," demanded the indignant orator, "that a Knatchbull was called to the Councils of his Sovereign, and that a Chandos was not?" And to this question the answer—ye gods! —was not uproarious laughter, but "loud cheers."*

Finally, the speech concluded with a flourish about the country gentlemen and the yeomanry of England, which almost sounds like a quotation from "Vivian Grey."†

The reader has now had an opportunity of reading in immediate succession the Marylebone address of 1833 and the speech to the Aylesbury farmers of 1834. Could any opinions be more contradictory than those expressed on those two different occasions?

* *Ibid.*

† *From the Aylesbury speech.*

"The agriculturists had a spirit of patriotism—they had on their side wealth and intelligence, and all the aristocracy of the country, an aristocracy which the wildest Liberals would prefer to that mongrel race which had already corrupted the greatest portion of Europe. (Cheers.) They had on their side the gentlemen of England, and the still noble remains of a once unrivalled yeomanry."

From "Vivian Grey."

"And then followed a long dissertation. Vivian Grey was talking to Mr. Stapylton Toad on the character of the noble statesman, and his views as to the agricultural interest, and the importance of the agricultural interest; and then a delicate hint was thrown out as to 'how delightful it would be to write a pamphlet together' on this mighty agricultural interest; and then came a panegyric on the character of country gentlemen, and English yeomen, and the importance of keeping up the old English spirit in the peasantry," etc., etc., etc., etc. (New edition, 70.)

"Believing," writes Mr. Disraeli to the Marylebone electors in 1833, "that unless the public burdens are speedily and materially reduced, a civil convulsion must occur, I am desirous of seeing a Parliamentary Committee appointed to revise the entire system of our taxation, with the object of relieving industry from those encumbrances which property is more capacitated to endure."

"He had long been of opinion," says Mr. Disraeli, to the Aylesbury farmers in 1834, "that a conspiracy existed among certain orders in the country against what was styled the Agricultural interest."

Is not the Mr. Disraeli of Marylebone, and 1833, as widely separated from the Mr. Disraeli of Aylesbury, and 1834, as the North Pole from the South? He denounces in 1834, as conspirators, the men whom in 1833 he sought as allies: a fanatic devotee of urban interests in 1833, he is an equally fanatic devotee of rural interests in 1834.

The change in the prospects of the Conservative party appears to have had the effect about this time of making Mr. Disraeli seriously think of abandoning the double game of Liberal in town and Conservative in country; but for a while he still held himself open to offers from either political party.

"The Chancellor called on me yesterday," writes Mr. Greville,* on December 6, 1834, "about getting young Disraeli into Parliament (through the means of George Bentinck) for Lynn. I had told him George

* Memoirs, iii. 170. Fourth edition.

wanted a good man to assist in turning out William Lennox, and he suggested the above-mentioned gentleman, whom he called a friend of Chandos. His political principles must, however, be in abeyance, for he said that Durham was doing all he could to get him, by the offer of a seat and so forth; if, therefore, he is undecided, and wavering between Chandos and Durham, he must be a mighty impartial personage. I don't think such a man will do, though just such as Lyndhurst would be connected with."

Lord Durham, it may be as well to remind readers of this generation, was recognised in 1834 as one of the leaders of Radicalism; indeed, of the Whig aristocrats, he was the only one who was distinctly pledged to Household Suffrage and Vote by Ballot. Of the Marquis of Chandos something has been said already; suffice it to add that he was one of the stubborn band of Tories who denounced Sir Robert Peel when he passed Catholic Emancipation, and fought the battle against Reform after the Tory leaders had left the field. Lord Durham was a Radical leader among Whigs; Lord Chandos, an ultra-Tory leader among Tories; the politician who wavered between the two might well be called "mighty impartial."

It is evident, however, that a week or so after the entry in Mr. Greville's diary, Mr. Disraeli had made his choice, and that he chose to be a True Blue. On December 16, he delivered a long speech at Wycombe, the representation of which he was for a third time seeking. In that speech he said not one

word about Triennial Parliaments or Vote by Ballot; the entire address was one long argument in favour of the new Tory Administration.

We are, fortunately, not left to mere newspaper reports for an account of this speech. With his characteristic belief in the importance of everything he said and did, Mr. Disraeli afterwards published it in pamphlet form, under the title "The Crisis Examined." The speech was, as I have said, for the most part a strong plea in favour of the Ministry of Sir Robert Peel, which had just come into power; but it contained some expressions of opinion which the cautious leader of the Conservative party would not much care to have heard.

Ireland, at that period, as so often since and before, was the great difficulty of the Ministers; and the scandal of the Irish Church was the prominent part of the Irish problem. In these days, the tithes still existed, and their collection was attended with scenes of wild disorder and terrible cruelty, and sometimes with murderous encounters. Mr. Disraeli sympathised in "The Crisis Examined" most strongly with the hate of the Irish tithes, which was then felt by every man of just and humane feeling; and he gave, likewise, a hearty adhesion to the prevalent project for reducing somewhat the bloated proportions of the Irish Church.

"*Twelve months, therefore,*" he said, "*must not pass over without the very name of tithes in that country*"—Ireland—"*being abolished for ever; nor do I deem it*

*less urgent that the Protestant Establishment in that country should be at once proportioned to the population which it serves."** I ask the reader to carefully mark this declaration of opinion.

Equally zealous was Mr. Disraeli that the usurpations of the Church in England should be reduced in favour of the rights of Dissenters.

"As for the question of the Church rate," he said, "*it is impossible that we can endure that every time one is levied, a town should present the scene of a contested election. The rights of the Establishment must be respected, but for the sake of the Establishment itself that flagrant scandal must be removed.*"†

Here, again, I ask the reader to take particular note of Mr. Disraeli's expression of opinion.

Another point of considerable importance, which Mr. Disraeli discussed in this speech, was whether Peel, now that he was in office, would be justified in passing measures to which he had been hostile in opposition. Mr. Disraeli decides this question emphatically in the affirmative.

"The truth is, gentlemen," he said, "a statesman is the creature of his age, the child of circumstance, the creation of his times. A statesman is essentially a practical character; and when he is called upon to take office, he is not to inquire what his opinions might or might not have been upon this or that subject—he is only to ascertain the needful and the beneficial, and the most feasible manner in which affairs are to be

* 1834 edition, 5. † *Ibid.* 8.

carried on. The fact is, the conduct and opinions of public men at different periods of their career must not be too curiously contrasted in a free and aspiring country. The people have their passions, and *it is even the duty of public men occasionally to adopt sentiments with which they do not sympathise, because the people must have leaders.* . . . . I laugh, therefore, at the objection against a man that, at a former period of his career, he advocated a policy different to his present one: all I seek to ascertain is whether his present policy be just, necessary, expedient; whether, at the present moment, he is prepared to serve the country according to its present necessities." *

* *Ibid.* 16-17. In this speech was contained the famous Ducrow simile—one of the first specimens of that power of satirical illustration which Lord Beaconsfield has found so useful in his career. "*The* Reform Ministry, indeed!" said Mr. Disraeli. "Why, scarcely an original member of that celebrated Cabinet remained. You remember, gentlemen, the story of Sir John Cutler's silk hose. These famous stockings remind me of this famous ministry; for really between Hobhouse darns, and Ellice botchings, I hardly can decide whether the hose are silk or worsted. *The* Reform Ministry! I dare say now some of you have heard of Mr. Ducrow, that celebrated gentleman who rides upon six horses. What a prodigious achievement! It seems impossible, but you have confidence in Ducrow! You fly to witness it; unfortunately, one of the horses is ill, and a donkey is substituted in its place. But Ducrow is still admirable; there he is, bounding along in a spangled jacket and cork slippers! The whole town is mad to see Ducrow riding at the same time on six horses; but now two more of the steeds are seized with the staggers, and lo! three jackasses in their stead! Still Ducrow persists, and still announces to the public that he will ride round is circus every night on six steeds. At last, all the horses are knocked up, and now there are half-a-dozen donkeys. What a change! Behold the hero in the amphitheatre, the spangled jacket thrown on one side, the cork slippers on the other! Puffing, panting, and perspiring, he pokes one sullen brute, thwacks another, cuffs a

A third time Mr. Disraeli was defeated, both Mr. Smith and Colonel Grey having again received more votes.*

But, still unconquered, he showed in the very hour of defeat that spirit of elastic self-confidence, and that patient steadiness of purpose, to which he owes so much of his life's success.

"He had," he said at a Conservative dinner about a fortnight after his defeat—"He had made two struggles for the independence of Wycombe, and he was prepared, if the opportunity offered, to make a third. (Cheers.) He was not at all disheartened; he did not in any way feel like a beaten man. Perhaps it was because he was used to it. (Cheers and laughter.) He would say of himself with the famous Italian general, who being asked in his old age why he was always victorious, replied, it was because he had always been beaten in youth. (Loud applause.)"†

third, and curses a fourth, while one brays to the audience, and another rolls in the sawdust. Behold the late Prime Minister and the Reform Ministry! The spirited and snow-white steeds have gradually changed into an equal number of sullen and obstinate donkeys. While Mr. Merryman, who, like the Lord Chancellor, was once the very life of the ring, now lies his despairing length in the middle of the stage, with his jokes exhausted and his bottle empty!"—*Ibid.* 29—31. In the title-page of the "Crisis Examined," as well as in that of other works of his youth, Lord Beaconsfield describes himself as "Disraeli the Younger."

* The numbers were—Smith, 288; Grey, 147; Disraeli, 128.

† *Bucks Herald*, Jan. 31, 1835.

CHAPTER V.

REACHING THE NADIR.

The year 1835 is one to which Mr. Disraeli must look back occasionally with feelings of poignant pain. In that year he reached his nadir.

In 1834 he published "The Revolutionary Epick." He had already given the world abundant proof of a conceit, both political and literary, that was almost superhuman. But "The Revolutionary Epick" eclipsed all previous performances.

The preface to that poem is perhaps the most extraordinary piece of writing that has ever been penned by any man, not admittedly a lunatic or an imbecile. "It was on the plains of Troy," it begins, "that I first conceived the idea of this work."*

Mark, first, the *mise en scène*. The plains of Troy! Mr. Disraeli is so impressed with the greatness of his work, and himself, that he must select as the birthplace of his poem the most remarkable spot on the whole earth: he stands with his epic in his hand, the central figure, at the centre of the universe!

"Wandering," proceeds Mr. Disraeli, "over that

* Preface, i.

illustrious scene, surrounded by the tombs of heroes and by the confluence of poetic streams, my musing thoughts clustered round the memory of that immortal song, to which all creeds and countries alike respond, which has vanquished Chance and defied Time. Deeming myself, perchance too rashly, in that excited hour, a Poet, I cursed the destiny that had placed me in an age that boasted of being anti-poetical. And while my Fancy thus struggled with my Reason, it flashed across my mind, like the lightning which was then playing over Ida,"—thus Nature, in one of her sublimest moods, is pressed into service: flashes of lightning; Mr. Disraeli; the plains of Troy—these are the magnificent stage directions—"it flashed across my mind, like the lightning which was then playing over Ida, that in those great poems which rise, the pyramids of poetic art, amid the falling and fading splendour of less creations, the Poet hath ever embodied the spirit of his Time. Thus the most heroic incident of an heroic age produced in the Iliad an Heroic Epick; thus, the consolidation of the most superb of Empires produced in the Æneid a Political Epick; the revival of Learning, and the birth of vernacular Genius, presented us in the Divine Comedy with a National Epick; and the Reformation and its consequences called from the rapt lyre of Milton a Religious Epick. And the spirit of my time, shall it alone be unceleb rated? Standing upon Asia, and gazing upon Europe, with the broad Hellespont alone between us, and the shadow of Night descending on

the mountains"—Nature pressed into service again —"these mighty continents appeared to me as it were the Rival Principles of Government, that at present contend for the mastery of the world. 'What!' I exclaimed, 'is the Revolution of France a less important event than the siege of Troy? Is Napoleon a less interesting character than Achilles? *For me remains the Revolutionary Epick.*"*

Homer, Virgil, Dante, Milton, and Mr. Disraeli—the Iliad, the Æneid, the Divine Comedy, Paradise Lost, and the Revolutionary Epick!—was there ever such strangely assorted company?

We can imagine the effect such a preface produced in 1834. Up to that year Mr. Disraeli had practically given proof of little beyond his own conceit. "Contarini Fleming" was in great part nonsense, "Alroy" was nonsense, "Vivian Grey's" cleverness was obscured by extravagance and vanity; and the author of all this mediocre stuff declares himself the successor of the Father of Poetry!

Let us remember, in addition to all this, the corresponding pretentiousness of appearance and tone, the flowing ringlets and the D'Orsay garments, the affectation of keeping the best company and drinking the finest wines: let us remember this, and we can well understand the bitter dislike and contempt which were excited by the Disraeli of 1834.

The "Revolutionary Epick" fully carries out the promise of the preface. Like the preface, void of

* *Ibid.* i.-ii.

idea and inflated in language, it confirms the impression that it is the work of a mind at once impotent and ambitious.

"I am not," wrote our poet, "one who finds consolation for the neglect of my contemporaries in the imaginary plaudits of a more sympathetic Posterity. The public will then decide whether this work is to be continued and completed; and if it pass in the negative, I shall, without a pang, hurl my lyre to Limbo."* The public has passed in the negative, to use Mr. Disraeli's strange phrase, and the lyre, accordingly, has been hurled to Limbo. A second edition was published about twenty years after the appearance of the first, but not in obedience to a demand from the public. It was published to carry out an idea of Mr. Disraeli, and under circumstances which we shall afterwards discuss, not wholly without edification.

Towards the close of 1834, Mr. Disraeli had, it will be remembered, already ceased to be "mighty impartial," and had given indications of emerging from Radicalism into the full splendour of a "True Blue." As yet, however, he had not openly and irrevocably declared himself. He had made speeches at Tory gatherings, but if he abused the Whigs, he let the Radicals alone. He had, in his speech at the Wycombe election of 1834, omitted all mention of Triennial Parliaments and Vote by Ballot; but he had certainly abstained from any condemnation of those Radical

* *Ibid.* iv.

nostrums. The moment, however, had at last come when he thought he might once and for ever throw off the Radical mask.

Sir Robert Peel, called to the head of the Government in November, 1834, was compelled by an adverse vote to resign in April of the following year. In the new Government formed by Lord Melbourne, Mr. Henry Labouchere was appointed Master of the Mint. When Mr. Labouchere, on taking office, appealed for re-election to the electors of Taunton, he found himself opposed by Mr. Disraeli.

Some astonishment was created by the boldness of Mr. Disraeli's enterprise; for Mr. Labouchere was not an unimportant member of the new Cabinet, had a good parliamentary reputation, and had been returned five times already by the constituency of Taunton. But Mr. Disraeli was wiser than his critics. M. Emile de Girardin, we are told by M. Louis Blanc,* regarded a deal with Armand Carrel as a *bonne fortune*. The originator of newspaper advertisements in France, understood the art of self-puffing well; but not a bit better than Mr. Disraeli. He has advanced himself from obscurity partly by the judicious selection of eminent opponents.

Still more astonishment was created by the political character in which Mr. Disraeli chose to appear. "Mr. Disraeli," wrote the *Taunton Courier*, a Liberal journal, (April 22nd, 1835,) "possesses the confidence of the Conservative Club in London, and to which

* "Histoire de Dix Ans," v. 64.

body of gentlemen this borough is indebted for his visit on the present occasion." What! the *protégé* of O'Connell and Hume; the writer of the Radical address to Marylebone, and "What is He?"; the advocate of Triennial Parliaments and Vote by Ballot, an avowed nominee of a Conservative Club—it was incredible!

First, a gentleman came forward to express absolute doubt of the accuracy of the *Taunton Courier*. "Mr. Disraeli," he wrote, "is a Liberal, and a member of the Westminster Reform Club." *

"So the Tories," wrote the *Morning Chronicle* of April 25, 1835, "have started Mr. Disraeli at Taunton

* "To the Editor of the *Morning Chronicle*.

"Sir,—In your journal of to-day, it is stated, on the authority of the *Taunton Courier*, that D'Israeli the Younger had been sent to that borough by the Conservative Club, to oppose the re-election of Mr. Labouchere. This statement (so far, at least, as the Conservative Club is concerned, must, I think, be a gross mistake, seeing that Mr. D'Israeli professes to be a Liberal, and in proof thereof is actually a member of the Westminster Reform Club, established last year in Great George Street, Westminster, by Messrs. Tennyson, Hume, and others of the Liberal party. Nay, more, proposed to offer himself as a candidate for Marylebone, and, on being told that his principles were considered somewhat doubtful, he upon a recent occasion put forth a pamphlet entitled 'What is He?' in which he recommends triennial Parliaments, election by ballot, and that the Tories should coalesce with Radicals. I refer you to the pamphlet itself rather than to extracts, and although it is as ambiguously worded as the most dexterous *trimmer* could wish, yet, coupling the above extracts with the fact of its having been written expressly with the view to recommend the writer to the favourable notice of the electors of Marylebone, it can hardly be believed that its author is now under the especial patronage of the Conservative Club.

"I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

"AN ELECTOR OF WESTMINSTER."

to oppose Mr. Labouchere, ... and report says that they have supplied him liberally with the sinews of war. . . . . Is he making a catspaw of the Tories, or are they making one of him?"

Mr. Disraeli, however, was preparing for himself far more violent and memorable attacks. In the course of his canvass, he made a most foolish speech, in which he attacked O'Connell in very severe terms. He called the Irish Tribune an incendiary and a traitor. The nomination took place on April 27; and Mr. Disraeli, after he had been proposed and seconded, made some attempt, as will be seen, to repair the error of his electioneering indiscretions.

This nomination speech is certainly one of the most startling even Lord Beaconsfield ever delivered; and it required even all the peculiar form of courage with which he is gifted, to make some of its statements without faltering.

The "Crisis Examined" was published in the December of 1834; this Taunton speech was delivered in April of 1835—that is, four or five months after. Yet Mr. Disraeli had in this short period made a complete change in his opinions on some of the most important and pressing questions of the time.

Take the question of the Irish Church.

In the "Crisis Examined," as will be remembered, he expressed the opinion that "the Protestant Establishment in that country"—Ireland—"should be at once proportioned to the population which it serves."

In the Taunton speech, he says on this same subject,—

"I cannot understand the principle by which the Whigs would reform, as they call it, the Church of Ireland! It appears to me that they offered a premium to the Whiteboys to destroy the Protestants. (Cheers from the Blues.) If forty-nine souls are not worthy to be saved, whilst fifty are, I think we shall soon have no congregations in Ireland which exceed the Popish tariff of salvation." *

Take the question of the Irish Tithes.

In the "Crisis Examined," he said, it will be remembered,—

"Twelve months, therefore, must not pass over without the very name of tithes in that country" —Ireland—"being abolished for ever."

Well, not twelve, but only five months have passed, and here is what Lord Beaconsfield had to say on this same question:—

"If the Irish Church has always been the intolerable nuisance it is described, why has this nuisance been so lately discovered? It is upon record that, twenty years ago, tithes were paid more readily than rents are now in England. Gentlemen, it is agitation that has made the nuisance, and it is the Whig party who for their own ends have encouraged the agitation."

Now this entire change of opinion is strange enough; but there is something that makes it stranger. In

* *Dorset County Chronicle*, April 30, 1835, quoted in *Morning Post*, March 2, 1835.

this interval of five months between the "Crisis Examined" and the Taunton speech, a terrible occurrence took place, which ought to have shaken anybody who had hitherto supported the Tithes, and most strongly confirmed anybody who had been hitherto opposed to them.

The speech of which the "Crisis Examined" was a republication, was delivered on December 16, 1834. In the *Times* of December 19 there is an account of a Tithe affray in Ireland, in which thirteen persons were killed, seven desperately wounded, and twenty others more or less seriously injured. Among those victims to the Tithe were at least two women, and the accounts given of the whole occurrence are, without exaggeration, appalling.*

Here then is the plain statement of Mr. Disraeli's conduct on this occasion. On December 16, 1834, he delivered a speech in which he declared that the very

* Let me make a quotation or two from the accounts published by the *Times* :—

"The *Southern Reporter* contains the names and descriptions of seven dangerously wounded, and thirteen killed, now lying in the temporary morgue at Rathcormack, where three coroners are officiating under circumstances of the most painful interest, described in three sentences in a despatch received in Cork on Saturday, dated one o'clock—'The town is full of military.' 'A fiery discussion is going on before the three coroners.' 'The excitement is terrible.' Its correspondent states—'To describe the state of the country since the tragic occurrence was enacted is not in the power of the writer. The shops in Watergrass Hill and Rathcormack are generally closed; business of every kind suspended; not a cow, a horse, a sheep, or a pig to be seen for miles. The people are dark and sullen, desperate and reckless. One old man, in the presence of the writer, was surrounded by several scores of peasants, fell upon his knees, and imprecated the vengeance of Heaven upon the destroyers of his children.

name of tithes should be abolished for ever in Ireland before twelve months had elapsed. On the very heels of that declaration comes a massacre, attended by surroundings of an appalling and heartrending nature. And the direct cause of this massacre is the Irish Tithe system.

Yet on April 17 in the following year, Mr. Disraeli contradicts his own expression of opinion, and is deaf to the thunderous confirmation which the Rathcormack massacre had given to that opinion.

"If there be anything," says Mr. Disraeli in this same Taunton speech, "on which I pique myself, it is my consistency!"*

Let us next advance to the explanation of his change as a thorough "True Blue" at Taunton, from the Radical candidate for Wycombe, who advocated Triennial Parliaments, Vote by Ballot, and all the other destructive Radical "cries."

"Gentlemen," he said, "if there be anything on

Another offered up an oath that he would not die till the blood in which he that moment knelt was avenged. The feeling is intense, the people are quite careless of their lives. They are incommunicative, and, with very few exceptions, were observed not to shed a tear.' We subjoin what follows on the same subject from the correspondent of the *Dublin Evening Post:* 'I went up to inspect the haggard where the carnage occurred, and so awful a spectacle I never witnessed. The straw all saturated with human gore, so that the blood oozed through the straw on the pressure of the foot, and, shocking to relate, the widow Collins was seen to kiss the blood of her sons, imprecating God's vengeance on the murderers of her children. Another man have I seen stamping his foot on the blood of his brother, and saying, "The man that shed this, my brother's blood, shall drink his own blood if I live."'"

* *Dorset County Chronicle*, April 30, 1835.

which I pique myself, it is my consistency. (Loud cheers.) Well, I shall be ready to prove my consistency, either in the House of Commons or on the hustings of Taunton. (Hear, hear.) Every man may be attacked once, but no one ever attacked me twice. (Cheers.) Here is my consistency. I have always opposed with my utmost energy the party of which my hon. opponent is a distinguished member. That party I have opposed for reasons I am prepared to give and to uphold. I look upon the Whigs as an anti-national party. . . . When I first entered into public life, I found the high places of the realm filled by the party of which my opponent is a member. . . . I considered it my duty to oppose the Whigs, and to ensure their discomfiture, and, if possible, their destruction as a party. (Murmurs, and loud cheers.) There was then no constitutional opposition to keep the Government in check. That great Tory party, which is now so strongly constituted, was a shattered, a disabled, and a disheartened fragment, self-confessing their own inability to carry on the King's government, and announcing the impending revolution. Gentlemen, had I been a political adventurer, I had nothing to do but to join the Whigs; but conscientiously believing that their policy was in every respect pernicious, I felt it my duty to oppose them. But how were they to be opposed? Where were the elements for a party to keep the Government in check and to bring together the old constitutional balance? I thought they existed in the Liberal Tories and in

those independent Reformers who had been returned to Parliament independently of the Whigs. I laboured for their union, and I am proud of it. Remember the Whig policy. They had a packed Parliament. They had altered the duration of Parliaments once before. . . . I wished to break their strength by frequent elections and frequent appeals to a misgoverned people. Therefore, I advocated the recurrence to those triennial Parliaments which it was once the proudest boast of the Tories to advocate. I wished to give the country gentlemen a chance of representing the neighbouring towns where they are esteemed, instead of the nominees of a sectarian oligarchy. Therefore I proposed the adoption of the ballot in the only constituencies willing to assume it. And now where is my inconsistency? (Loud cheers.) . . . The mighty Whig party, which had consented to a revolution to gain power, fell to pieces. . . . Gentlemen, the object for which I laboured is attained. The balance of parties is restored; and now, gentlemen, I do not longer advocate the measures in question, merely because they are no longer necessary." *

Let us briefly examine the defence Mr. Disraeli gives of the change in his opinions. It was necessary, he said, to create an Opposition to fight against the then all-powerful Whigs; and this he proposed to do by producing an alliance between the Radicals and Liberal Tories, and by frequent appeals to the constituencies.

* *Ibid.*

First, let us remark the boldness of Mr. Disraeli's expedient. Who but he could have ever thought of bringing together the representatives of Conservative counties and Radical towns, the farmer's friends and the friends of the working man? Who but he could think of proposing a platform, on which Lord Chandos and Joseph Hume, Sir Robert Peel and Daniel O'Connell, would stand side by side?

And, again, what was the object of this alliance? In whose interest was it proposed? Not in that of both parties; Mr. Disraeli does not venture to mention one principle which united both parties. Was it in the interest of the Radicals? Then Mr. Disraeli was *using* the Tories for the purposes of the Radicals. In the interests of the Tories only? Then Mr. Disraeli was cheating Mr. Hume into playing the game of Sir Robert Peel.

As might be expected from one playing such a double game, Mr. Disraeli varied his plans as the fortunes of the two parties rose and fell. In 1832, the Tories were "a shattered, a disabled, and a disheartened fragment;" in 1832, therefore, the Radicals were playing the first, and the Tories only the second part, in Mr. Disraeli's programme. "He was objected to," said Mr. Disraeli on the hustings at Wycombe in 1832, ". . . . because of his alliance with the Tories." The "*Tories had tendered him their support*, and, *if they were inclined to serve the purposes of the people, and help them to obtain their object, would he, as a friend of the people, be justified in rejecting their aid?*"

Thus, then, the Tories are used simply for "the purposes of the people,"—that is, for the purpose of the Radicals.

But in 1835 the Tories had completely risen from their defeat, and had once more become a great party. Accordingly, we are now told that the Radicals were merely used to "serve the purposes" of the Tories. "Gentlemen—The object for which I laboured is attained; *the balance of parties is restored*"—that is, the Tories are once more strong; "and now, gentlemen, *I do no longer advocate the measures in question, simply because they are no longer necessary.*" What does this mean, but that the cry of Triennial Parliaments and Vote by Ballot was put forward merely to catch the Radical vote for the Tory party; and that the Tory party, having once more become strong, these baits were "no longer necessary." And yet, "with matchless impudence of face," Mr. Disraeli winds up this explanation of his conduct by confidently asking—"Is this an answer? Is this inconsistency?"

It will be seen that, throughout this defence of his, Mr. Disraeli dexterously manages to so mark the difference between a Reformer and a Whig as to suggest that a man might be a Reformer and yet not be a Liberal. I have already shown the reader the falseness of this position; and, as my narrative proceeds, I shall heap proof on proof that Mr. Disraeli, on entering public life, represented himself to be a Liberal. At this stage, it is sufficient to point to the

answer which he made to the accusation that he had formerly belonged to a Liberal club. His answer was a pointblank denial that he had ever belonged to that or to any other political club in his life.*

Now, this controversy as to whether Mr. Disraeli did or did not belong to the Westminster Club, is one to which the reader ought to pay particular attention. It is in the first place important because of the character of that club; but is, perhaps, still more important in another respect. Here is a distinct issue of fact, upon which mistake is impossible; and, therefore, it is an issue which decides irrevocably in favour or against the personal veracity of the persons engaged in it.

The "Westminster Elector" who, on the first announcement of Mr. Disraeli's candidature at Taunton, in the Conservative interest, had stated that Mr. Disraeli was a Liberal, and a member of the Westminster Reform Club, immediately after the Taunton speech, returned to the charge. And then he told this startling story. Mr. Disraeli, he said, was elected a member on the proposition of Mr. Henry Lytton Bulwer, M.P.,—who was then, and remained ever after, a Liberal,—being seconded by Dr. John Elmore, "one of the most honest reformers in the

* "I have always fought the battle of the people from my own resources, and am not indebted to any other person for a single farthing, and I will fight again on my own resources, and neither that club nor any other has ever given me anything. No, gentlemen, or the Westminster Reform Club. It is a club I never heard of, and I never belonged to a political club in my life."

kingdom." He neglected, however, to pay his subscription; but at last, after repeated applications, sent an insolent letter, which the Westminster Elector gives textually. Another application brought another letter from Mr. Disraeli, which contained his fee, and a request that his name should be withdrawn from the club. This letter the Westminster Elector also gives textually. The committee refused to receive a subscription from one who did not intend to make use of the club: Mr. Disraeli's cheque was returned;* and so his connection with the Westminster Reform Club ended.

* The reader will probably find of interest the entire letter from the Westminster Elector:—

"WHAT IS HE?

"To the Editor of the *Morning Chronicle.*

"Sir,—Your journal of to-day, in reporting the election proceedings at Taunton, on Monday last, gives me to understand that Mr. D'Israeli solemnly declared '*upon his honour*' that he never had been a member of the Westminster Reform Club. This unqualified assertion is, no doubt, a startling one to you, after the information you had from me last week; and I question much if your surprise at it will in any way cease when I submit to you, as I now do, the following facts and documents. On the 2nd of July last, Mr. D'Israeli was elected a member of the Westminster Reform Club, having been proposed by his friend Henry Lytton Bulwer, Esq., M.P., and seconded by one of the most honest reformers in the kingdom, Dr. John Elmore. This election was intimated to him in the usual way by the Secretary of the club, with a request to pay his entrance-money and subscription. The latter ceremony, however, he neglected to do; and after repeated applications for the money, a letter, of which the following is a copy, was received by the Secretary of the club:—

"'3, Park Street, Grosvenor Square, Jan. 29.

"'Sir,—Having received a letter from you this morning, apprising me that I am a threatened defaulter in the matter of the Westminster Club, I beg to inform you that I never entered the

The reader has now the facts on both sides in the epistolary controversy between Mr. Disraeli and the Westminster Elector. I leave him to form his own judgment.

The Taunton candidature not only drew upon Mr.

walls of the club-house but once, and that was with the intention of paying my admission fee and subscription. On that occasion I was informed that the Secretary was absent in Ireland; and I freely confess to you that I was then unable to obtain any satisfactory evidence that the club had a *bonâ-fide* existence. If, however, I have been acting under a misapprehension, and I am to understand that the club really exists, without any view of immediate dissolution, I shall be happy to forward the cheque which you require.

"'I am, yours, etc.,

"'B. D'ISRAELI.'

"So wrote Mr. D'Israeli on the 29th January, in reply to which he was informed (but without reminding him that he had frequented the club, employed its servants, and of other particulars not necessary here to mention), that the club not only was in existence, but with certainty of success; the consequence of which was that on the 8th March he wrote the following letter to the Secretary :—

"'Sir,—I enclose you a draft for the sum you require, and as my engagements have not permitted me to avail myself of the Westminster Club, I shall feel obliged by your doing me the favour of withdrawing my name from the list of the members of the society.

"'I am, Sir, yours, etc.,

"'B. D'ISRAELI.'"

The cheque, as sent, was immediately returned, with the assurance that if it did not suit him to belong to the club, it was not the wish of the members to have his money. Thus the matter rests; and contrasting the facts now set forth with Mr. D'Israeli's declaration at Taunton, it will, I apprehend, be unnecessary for him to write another pamphlet to prove to the world "What is he?" I should add that the Editor of the *Morning Chronicle* alleges himself to have seen the originals of the letters of Mr. Disraeli which are quoted in the Westminster Elector's letter. Mr. Fraser Rae, in an article in the *Nineteenth Century* (May 1878, pp. 912—915) gives some interesting particulars with regard to the club, in addition to those mentioned by the Westminster Elector, prefacing his revelations by the statement that "their authenticity is beyond question, because they are extracted

Disraeli numberless attacks from the Liberal press,* but provoked a giant in invective to an ever-memorable reply.

In the course of his canvass, Mr. Disraeli had taken up against Mr. Labouchere the favourite charge against the Whig Ministers of having formed an alliance with O'Connell. In doing this, he was imprudent enough, as I have already said, to speak of the Irish tribune as an "incendiary" and a "traitor." Apparently, he soon repented of his language, for in his speech on the hustings, as has been seen, he endeavoured

from the original minute-book of its proceedings which is now before me" (912). Of the members of the club, only three, he says, now survive—Mr. Michael Bass, M.P., Mr. Edmond Beales, M.A., and Lord Beaconsfield. He shows the character of the club by giving the names of its founders, among whom were the well-known Alderman Wood, Daniel O'Connell, and Mr. D. W. Harvey; and among its members were Feargus O'Connor, Colonel Perronet Thompson, and Joseph Hume (912). He then—still quoting from the minutes—confirms the statement of the "Westminster Elector" as to the circumstances of Mr. Disraeli's election and subsequent withdrawal from the club (913). In this controversy, particular attention ought to be paid to the dates. It was on the 8th March that Mr. Disraeli finally withdrew from the Westminster Club; the speech denying that he had ever belonged to it was made on April 17—a little more than a month after.

* As specimens, I give two quotations :—

"The learned author of 'Vivian Grey,'" wrote the *Morning Chronicle* (April 30, 1835), commenting on the letter of the Westminster Elector and Mr. Disraeli's speech, "has some advantages over most people, for he seems to have succeeded in persuading public men, of principles the most opposite, that he shared their opinions, so that no man knows whether his knowledge is derived from private confidence or from sources accessible to all."

"The 'Vivian Grey' of fiction," wrote the *Globe* (May 2, 1835), "is now the 'Vivian Grey' of politics. . . . . *If there be anything*, says Mr. D'Israeli, in his speech at Taunton, '*on which I pique myself, it is my consistency.*' This may, perhaps, be deemed conclusive.

to partially explain his language away.* It is quite possible, then, that the attack on O'Connell was not quite so vehement as was at first thought; or that the offensiveness of the form in which the attack was clothed was due to the loose-tongued heat of electioneering. I omit no consideration that might extenuate the language of Mr. Disraeli's speech. But though I make every allowance that is fair, or even conceivable, one great fact remains: Mr. Disraeli attacked the man under whose political auspices he had been anxious to enter on political life, three years before. The reader has seen the letter of O'Connell which Mr. Disraeli took care to have placarded over the streets of Wycombe in 1832. Was it honest—was it manly—was it decent of Mr. Disraeli to attack the writer of that letter? The castigation which his offence brought down was severe, terribly severe; but any compassion for his scourged back would be utterly misplaced.

People are apt to pique themselves on that which they possess least. Besides, Mr. D'Israeli here seems to do himself less than justice. There are *many things* on which he piques himself quite as justly—to say the least—as on his great political consistency. He piques himself on his rings, and on his ringlets, his fashionable airs, and his consummate—modesty!"

* "Perhaps I may take the opportunity of explaining to that honourable gentleman who seconded my opponent, and who laid so much stress on the observation that the Whigs had seized the bloody hand of O'Connell. Is it possible that so elaborate a rhetorician as the hon. gentleman can have literally supposed that Mr. O'Connell was in the habit of going to the House of Commons with his hands reeking with gore, or that the Whig Government crawled upon their knees to embrace it? I meant they had formed an alliance with one whose policy was hostile to the preservation of the country, who threatens us with the dismemberment of the empire, which cannot take place without a civil war."—*Dorset County Chronicle*, April 30, 1835.

Before giving O'Connell's reply, it is well to notice a letter in the *Morning Chronicle* from a Mr. D. Ronayne, which, recapitulating the terms Mr. Disraeli was reported to have applied to O'Connell, expresses the strong opinion that Mr. Disraeli must have been misrepresented; "because," writes Mr. Ronayne, "I can scarcely believe it possible that he could have applied such epithets to Mr. O'Connell, of whom he has within the last month spoken to me in terms of the most extravagant admiration, and at the same time requested of me to communicate to Mr. O'Connell on the first opportunity his kind remembrances to him, which I accordingly did."

If Mr. Ronayne knew, as well as we do now, in what different terms Mr. Disraeli could speak, in December at Wycombe, and in April at Taunton, of such momentous questions as the Irish Church and the Irish Tithes, perhaps he would never have found it so strange that he should thus have expressed himself so differently within a short space with regard to O'Connell.

And now for the speech of O'Connell. It was delivered at a meeting of the Trades Unions in Dublin. He began by making allusion to the many attacks which were daily made on him by English speakers and English journals. He then went on :—

"I must confess there is one of the late attacks on me which excited in my mind a great deal of astonishment. (Hear, hear.) It is this—the attack lately made at Taunton by Mr. D'Israeli. (Hear.) In the annals of

political turpitude there is not anything deserving the name of blackguardism to equal that attack upon me. What is my acquaintance with this man?"

And, then, O'Connell proceeds to tell the story of his having written a letter of recommendation in favour of Mr. Disraeli to the electors of Wycombe in 1832. The reader has seen the letter in the preceding chapter, on Lord Beaconsfield's first contest.

"What is my acquaintance with this man?" said O'Connell. "Just this. In 1831, or the beginning of 1832, the borough of Wycombe became vacant. I then knew him, but not personally—I knew him merely as the author of one or two novels. He got an introduction to me, and wrote me a letter stating that I was a Radical reformer, and as he was also a Radical—(laughter)—and was going to stand upon the Radical interest for the borough of Wycombe, where he said there were many persons of that way of thinking who would be influenced by my opinion, he would feel obliged by receiving a letter from me, recommendatory of him as a Radical. His letter to me was so distinct upon the subject, that I immediately complied with the request, and composed as good an epistle as I could in his behalf. I am in the habit of letter-writing, sir—(cheers and laughter)—and Mr. Disraeli thought this letter so valuable that he not only took the autograph, but had it printed and placarded. It was, in fact, the ground upon which he canvassed the borough. He was, however, defeated, but that was not my fault.

(Laughter.) I did not demand gratitude from him, but I think if he had any feeling of his own he would conceive I had done him a civility at least, if not a service, which ought not to be repaid by atrocity of the foulest description. (Hear, hear.)"

Then O'Connell proceeds to trace Mr. Disraeli's career through some of the windings with which the reader has been made familiar,—how he started as a Radical for Marylebone, and how, after his defeats as a Radical, he tried the game of Conservatism; and then O'Connell went on:—

"At Taunton, this miscreant had the audacity to style me an incendiary! Why, I was a greater incendiary in 1831 than I am at present, if I ever were one—(laughter)—and if I am, he is doubly so for having employed me. (Cheers and laughter.) Then he calls me a traitor. My answer to this is—he is a liar. (Cheers.) He is a liar in action and in words. His life is a living lie. He is a disgrace to his species. What state of society must that be that could tolerate such a creature—having the audacity to come forward with one set of principles at one time, and obtain political assistance by reason of those principles, and at another to profess diametrically the reverse? His life, I say again, is a living lie. He is the most degraded of his species and kind; and England is degraded in tolerating or having upon the face of her society a miscreant of his abominable, foul, and atrocious nature. (Cheers.)"

And, finally, there came that terrible allusion

to Mr. Disraeli's Hebrew origin, which will never be forgotten:—

"His name shows he is by descent a Jew. . . . . There is a habit of underrating that great nation—the Jews. . . . . I have the happiness of being acquainted with some Jewish families in London; and among them, more accomplished ladies, or more humane, cordial, high-minded, or better-educated gentlemen, I have never met. (Hear, hear.) It will not be supposed, therefore, that when I speak of Disraeli as the descendant of a Jew, that I mean to tarnish him on that account. They were once the chosen people of God. There were miscreants amongst them, however, also, and it must have certainly been from one of those that Disraeli descended. (Roars of laughter.) He possesses just the qualities of the impenitent thief who died upon the cross, whose name, I verily believe, must have been Disraeli. (Roars of laughter.) For aught I know, the present Disraeli is descended from him, and with the impression that he is, I now forgive the heir-at-law of the blasphemous thief who died upon the cross. (Loud cheers, mingled with laughter.)"

O'Connell's attack on Mr. Disraeli found its way into almost every newspaper in the kingdom, and—like the attacks by great minds—would, even if Mr. Disraeli had then died, have probably secured for him an immortality of infamy.

Such was the nature of the assault; we now know enough of the assailed to judge of its effect. Inordi-

nately vain, fatally vindictive, conscious of commanding powers, and yet whipped in the most public pillory, amid the derisive laughter and applause of the world, Mr. Disraeli must have passed, at this period, through a paroxysm of rage, humiliation, and despair.

His first step seems to show that his fury had for the moment bereft him of sense. But, before telling what that was, a brief reference is necessary to another political quarrel in which O'Connell was at this time involved. Lord Alvanley having made an offensive allusion to O'Connell, the Irish agitator had replied by calling the noble lord "a bloated buffoon." Lord Alvanley sent O'Connell a challenge; and, not satisfied with this, and before O'Connell had time to reply, drew up a requisition to Brooks's Club, of which he and the agitator were members, demanding O'Connell's expulsion. A challenge to O'Connell was a very safe display of valour. In 1815, he had, as is known, killed in a duel a gentleman named D'Esterre. This catastrophe weighed heavily on his conscience, for, whatever were his faults, he was imbued with a deep and sincere sense of religion; and, to a man of such a character, duelling could not but appear a great crime. Accordingly, shortly after D'Esterre's death, O'Connell made a public vow that he would never again accept a challenge. O'Connell's sons, however, were not bound by the vow of their father, and one of them, Morgan O'Connell, determined to punish Lord Alvanley. He wrote a challenge to his father's assailant; the challenge was accepted, and a meeting took place.

Morgan O'Connell fired three, Lord Alvanley two shots; * but neither of the combatants was wounded.

The duel between Lord Alvanley and Mr. Morgan O'Connell was fought on May 4. On *the very following day* Mr. Disraeli wrote this letter:—

"31A, Park Street, Grosvenor Square,
"Tuesday, May 5th, 1835.

"Sir,—As you have established yourself as the champion of your father, I have the honour to request your notice to a very scurrilous attack which your father has made upon my conduct and character.

"Had Mr. O'Connell, according to the practice observed among gentlemen, appealed to me respecting the accuracy of the reported expressions before he indulged in offensive comments upon them, he would, if he can be influenced by a sense of justice, have felt that such comments were unnecessary. He has not thought fit to do so, and he leaves me no alternative but to request that you, as his son, will resume your vicarious duties of yielding satisfaction for the insults which your father has too long lavished with impunity on his political opponents.

"I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,
"B. D'ISRAELI.

"Morgan O'Connell, Esq., M.P."

Mr. Morgan O'Connell declined this challenge, explaining that, while he would not allow other people to insult his father, he did not hold himself accountable for what his father might do to other people. He had challenged Lord Alvanley because he "conceived he had purposely insulted" his "father by calling a meeting at Brooks's for the purpose of expelling him from the club, he being at the time absent in Ireland."

* Lord Alvanley did not understand the signal the first time, and young O'Connell alone fired.

And, then, Mr. Morgan O'Connell proceeds to deny the right of Mr. Disraeli to insult him,* and requests Mr. Disraeli, accordingly, to withdraw his letter. Some other letters passed, the effect of which was that Mr. Disraeli undertook to write a letter to Daniel O'Connell, in the hope of giving the son a proper ground for a challenge. "I shall take every opportunity," wrote Mr. Disraeli to Mr. Morgan O'Connell, "of holding your father's name up to public contempt, and I fervently pray that you, or some of his blood, may attempt to avenge the unextinguishable hatred with which I shall pursue his existence."

And now for Mr. Disraeli's letter to O'Connell.† "Although," it begins, "you have long placed yourself out of the pale of civilization, still I am one who will not be insulted even by a yahoo without chastising it."

Then, recalling the duel O'Connell's son had fought

* "When I deny your right to call on me in the present instance, I also beg leave most unequivocally to deny your right to address any insulting letter to me, who am almost personally unknown to you, and unconscious of ever having given you the slightest offence."

† The following quotations from the journals of the day on the controversy between Lord Beaconsfield and O'Connell will be read, perhaps, with interest:—

(*Spectator*, May 9th, 1835.) "D'Israeli 'the Younger' has done much to throw ridicule on the practice of duelling. The fury into which he has plunged, because nobody thinks it worth while to treat his raving with anything but cool contempt, is very ridiculous. How he blusters and fumes! He may challenge every man in the House of Commons, and insult every member of the United Service Club, without the least danger to his valuable life. If any one should gratify Mr. D'Israeli so far as to accept a challenge from him, the man would be

with "another individual on whom you had dropped your filth," Mr. Disraeli goes on to relate his failure to induce Mr. Morgan O'Connell to accept a similar challenge. He next complains that O'Connell had founded his comments on a "hasty and garbled report," and then he replies to the charge of having been once a Radical and now a Tory. His answer is the same as that he gave at Taunton—that he was the opponent of the Whigs at Wycombe in 1832, that he was still their opponent, and that, therefore, he was quite consistent: failing, however, to show why he advocated all the Radical cries in the first period, and

set down at once as a fit inmate for a madhouse. As a lady of fashion would find it impossible to wear a dress of the same pattern as that of an alderman's wife, so any person, pretending to the possession of common sense, would blush at the idea of sending a challenge after reading Mr. D'Israeli's last epistle to Mr. Morgan O'Connell."—(*Spectator*, same date.) "Another assailant of the agitator has fared no better. Mr. Benjamin D'Israeli chose to commence a war of abuse with the greatest master of abuse; and then, finding himself worsted, pretends that he is an injured person. He reminds us of the puppy yelping under the pain of a kick from some strong-limbed horse, at whose heels he had been snapping and snarling for miles. He has only received his deserts. Assuredly we approve not of the coarse, vituperative language in which O'Connell sometimes indulges. Our protest against this practice, on the score of policy as well as taste, stands recorded, but it is too much to expect that any man in the possession of a powerful weapon should suffer all kinds of assaults and not use it in self-defence. This Mr. D'Israeli too, with matchless effrontery, accuses O'Connell of injustice in assuming the correctness of a newspaper report of his Taunton speech, while he founds a long letter of vituperation of O'Connell on the faith of a newspaper report of O'Connell's Dublin speech! It is difficult to believe that the man can be in his right senses. D'Israeli confesses that he—*he!*—endeavoured to make a tool of O'Connell, and obtain his assistance under pretence of being a Radical, while all the time he had made up his mind to turn Tory again as soon as it answered his purpose! Was

had dropped all these same cries in the second stage of his career. Then he brings against O'Connell this very same charge of inconsistency; contending that O'Connell's abuse of the Whigs in 1832, and his alliance with them in 1835, were irreconcileable—an argument the fallaciousness of which I have already exposed; and finally, the letter winds up with this vigorous passage:—

"I admire your scurrilous allusion to my origin. It is clear that the 'hereditary bondsman' has already forgotten the clank of his fetters. I know the tactics

there ever such an unblushing avowal of political profligacy? But Mr. D'Israeli's conduct has been consistently absurd to the end. Because Mr. Morgan O'Connell had called Lord Alvanley to account for endeavouring to procure his father's expulsion from Brooks's—because the son claimed satisfaction on behalf of the father—*therefore* Mr. D'Israeli supposes that he was bound to give *him* satisfaction, as if he had the same claim upon the son of Mr. O'Connell that Mr. O'Connell himself has! Finding that Mr. Morgan O'Connell will not indulge him, this pugnacious gentleman declares that he intended to insult Mr. O'Connell, and 'fervently prays' that some member of that gentleman's family 'will attempt to avenge' the 'unextinguishable hatred *with which he shall pursue his existence*.' And yet Mr. D'Israeli conceives himself to be possessed of an astounding faculty for statesmanship, and talks of contending with the most powerful orator and versatile politician of the day on the floor of the House of Commons. Impudence and conceit could certainly go no further than this."—(*True Sun*, May 6th, 1835.) "So gross, so vulgar, so impertinent, so cowardly an epistle never came from the hands of a literary coxcomb than that which has been written to Mr. Morgan O'Connell by the adventurer who twice brought himself to market, and returned from Taunton and Marylebone with the halter about his neck, but no money for his owners. It may be one of the curiosities of literature,—if there be anything curious in the fact,—that the son of an industrious bookmaker should prove himself both profligate and absurd. Ambitious of newspaper distinction, beyond that which his own insignificance could confer upon him, Mr. D'Israeli the younger is fain 'to

of your Church—it clamours for toleration, and it labours for supremacy. I see that you are quite prepared to persecute. With regard to your taunts as to my want of success in my election contests, permit me to remark that I had nothing to appeal to but the good sense of the people. No threatening skeletons canvassed for me. A death's-head and cross-bones were not blazoned on my banners. My pecuniary resources, too, were limited. I am not one of those public beggars that we see swarming with their obtrusive boxes in

hang up his breeks amang men's clothes,' and so he challenges Mr. Morgan O'Connell to a 'vicarious combat.' . . . ."

The following verses, though somewhat doggrel, give a picture of the ideas of the time with regard to our present Premier. They are taken from a set of verses, headed "Portraits from a Pistol Gallery," which appeared in the *Morning Chronicle*, May 8, 1835:—

"This is an author, the first of our day,
Who wrote the great novel of 'Vivian Grey,'
And another grand and instructive book,
How to dine and drink and dress like a duke;
Also an Epick whose sale's at zero,
And of these is himself the hero.
Though the Fates won't let him just now be glorious,
He at least contrives to be ever notorious—
Sometimes stealing the hearts of the Blues
In velvet trousers and crimson shoes,
With jewels and chains and rings from Ransom,
And a face, oh! was anything ever so handsome?
Sometimes deigning to teach mankind
Such times require one master mind
To control this world—'mid the whirl and whiz
Of jarring systems—such mind being his.
At Taunton, a zealot for Lords and Throne,
A Republican stout in St. Mary-le-bone;
Spouting alternately Archer and Scrub
For my lady—and the Carlton Club.
But lo! at a few withering epithets sore,
And to live in the newspapers one day more—
This is the man
Who has challenged the man
Who challenged the man
Who challenged the great Agitator."

the chapels of your creed; nor am I in possession of a princely revenue arising from a starving race of fanatical slaves. Nevertheless, I have a deep conviction that the hour is at hand when I shall be more successful, and take my place in that proud assembly of which Mr. O'Connell avows his wish to be no longer a member. I expect to be a representative of the people before the repeal of the Union. We shall meet at Philippi; and rest assured that, confident in a good cause, and in some energies which have been not altogether unimproved, I will seize the first opportunity of inflicting upon you a castigation which will make you at the same time remember and repent the insults that you have lavished upon

"BENJAMIN D'ISRAELI."

O'Connell and Mr. Disraeli did meet at Philippi. How Mr. Disraeli attempted to inflict the promised castigation on the Irish agitator, and what was the result, will soon be seen.

CHAPTER VI.

OTHER CONTROVERSIES.

THE world had not yet ceased to laugh at O'Connell's unsparing dissection of Lord Beaconsfield, when that gentleman once more claimed its attention.

More useful, after all, than any gift Nature can bestow upon a man, is the gift of unfailing self-conceit. The man so blessed comes, in his opinion, triumphantly out of every argument—is, in his own eyes, covered with glory, when, in the eyes of others, he is bespattered with shame; imagines himself grossly ill-treated, when, in the opinion of all others, he has received richly-deserved punishment.

An ordinary man would have felt the shame and failure which fell upon Lord Beaconsfield in 1835 so keenly, as to desire nothing better than obscurity for some time to come. But Lord Beaconsfield is not an ordinary man—Lord Beaconsfield possesses the gift of unfailing self-conceit.

It has been already seen that, at an early period in his career, he had, by some means or other, obtained the friendship of Lord Lyndhurst. Mr. Greville has,

it has also been seen, unkindly suggested that the intimacy was due to that feeling which is said to attract black sheep to black sheep. That early friendship of Lord Beaconsfield is certainly one of the most significant and most curious points in his career. How came it that this young man, the son of a Jewish *litterateur*, made himself the friend of a Lord Chancellor, a great political chief? How many problems of the like kind are we not called upon to solve every day of our lives? Why, of two men born in exactly the same rank of life, is the one admitted to good society, and the other excluded from it? Examine the two men, and you often find that the man of success is the meaner man of the two—gifted with less intelligence, poorer in heart, lower in ideal, less truthful in nature. Can it be, then, that social successes, that "big friends"—Lord Lyndhurst, for example,— are obtained by mean and not by high qualities, by servility and "cheek," by an over-estimate of frivolous aims, and a careful suppression of truth as to one's real position, which amounts to a *suggestio falsi?*

One is often set a-thinking on such questions in studying the career of the man who is now called Earl of Beaconsfield.

"Vindication of the English Constitution, in a Letter to a Noble and Learned Lord, by Disraeli the Younger" —such is the title of the work with which Mr. Disraeli challenged public attention towards the end of 1835. It is, indeed, a marvellous production, but its main characteristics and its main principles are of a kind

with which the reader has already been made familiar. My quotations from this work shall, therefore, be few and brief; and the first shall be one, which has little to do with the subject of the letter, but is illustrative of the personal character of Lord Beaconsfield. In proving one of his philosophic propositions, he lugs in a story about a Pasha of Egypt, who took it into his head that representative institutions would be suitable to his kingdom.

"It so happened," writes the Vindicator of the Constitution, "that a young English gentleman, who was on his travels, was at this period resident in Cairo, and as he had more than once had the good fortune in an audience of engaging the attention of the pacha, by the readiness or patience of his replies, his Highness determined to do the young Englishman the honour of consulting him."*

The pacha unfolds his plan, and here is how it is met. "The surprise of our countryman, when he received the communication of the pacha, was not unconsiderable; but he was one of those *who had seen sufficient of the world never to be astonished; not altogether untinctured with political knowledge, and gifted with that philosophical exemption from prejudice, which is one of the most certain and most valuable results of extensive travel.* Our countryman communicated to the Egyptian ruler *with calmness and with precision* the immediate difficulties that occurred to him, explained to the successor of the Pharaohs and the Ptolemies that

* "Vindication," 102-3.

the political institutions of England had been the gradual growth of ages, and that there is no political function which demands a finer discipline or a more regulated preparation, than the exercise of popular suffrage."*

"God is great!" said Mehemet Ali to the traveller; "you are a wise man. Allah! Kerim, but you spit pearls"—and persists in his plan.†

Of course Lord Beaconsfield himself is the hero of this interesting little story. Even in a treatise on a philosophic subject, the restless and ever-present vanity of the man insists on his introducing his own personality with a flourish of trumpets characteristically loud and unblushing.

And now for some of the Vindicator's political views. One of the first and most startling is a denial that "*the House of Commons is the House of the People, or that the members of the House of Commons are the Representatives of the People.*" ‡

What, then, the reader will naturally ask, is the House of Commons? "The Commons of England," answers Mr. Disraeli, "form *an Estate*, and the members of the House of Commons represent that Estate." § And, again, we are told that that Estate "consists of a very limited section of our fellow-subjects, invested for the general advantage of the commonwealth, with certain high functions and noble privileges." ‖

This idea of the nation being divided into estates is one for which Lord Beaconsfield has shown an abiding love. It is brought forward, not only in the "Vindication," but also in "Coningsby" and in "Sybil,"

* *Ibid.* 103-4. † *Ibid.* 104-5. ‡ *Ibid.* 66. § *Ibid.* ‖ *Ibid.* 66-7.

in some of his election addresses, and in many of his speeches on Parliamentary Reform.

And now for Lord Beaconsfield's distinction between the Upper and Lower Houses. The distinction is very small indeed. "*The Commons, for their own convenience, meet in Parliament by their representatives; the Lords, from their limited number, meet personally.*"*

This, I think, is quite enough of this part of the "Vindication." I don't know whether a man "spits pearls,"—to use the expression Mr. Disraeli attributes to the Pacha of Egypt,—when he attacks everybody whom he had formerly professed to love; but, if so, Mr. Disraeli's book is a rope of pearls. The "anti-constitutional" writers are denounced in almost every page of this work of 1835; although in 1832 Mr. Disraeli was glad to receive a letter of recommendation from the political representative of those writers in Parliament. In 1832 Mr. Disraeli sought the aid of O'Connell as well as that of Joseph Hume. In this pamphlet O'Connell is abused in the most violent language.†

In 1833, Mr. Disraeli sought the representation of Marylebone on what were considered Radical principles, and in 1834 he was a member of the Westminster Reform Club. In this work of 1835 he speaks of "the kennel orators of Westminster and Marylebone."‡

* *Ibid.* 142.

† "Nay, the authorized agitator of the administration itself is sent upon a provincial tour of treason . . . . the vagabond and over-rated rebel—vomiting his infamous insolence in language mean as his own soul!"—*Ibid.* 141.

‡ *Ibid.* 148.

But, after all, these things are meant but as a prelude to Lord Beaconsfield's swelling theme. All the parade of history and philosophy are but an introduction to remarks on the questions which then absorbed the attention of Lord Beaconsfield and of the two English parties. The "Vindication" is really intended to be an indictment of the Whig party. As is not unfrequently the case with Lord Beaconsfield, his anxiety to prove his theme leads him into statements which are directly contrary to fact. Thus in page 139 of "The Vindication" we are told: "The Whigs, under George the First, in pursuance of their plan of reducing the English monarch to the character of a Venetian Doge, succeeded in carrying a bill through the Upper House to deprive the King of his prerogative of creating further Peers, and thus to convert *the free and democratic Peerage of England* into an odious oligarchy of exclusive privilege; but the House of Commons, *led by the Tory country gentlemen*, rejected the proposition with becoming decision."

Now here is a statement with regard to one of the most important and best-known events in our parliamentary history. It is a point, then, upon which no English political writer ought to make a mistake. Any inaccuracy he may commit is the result of deliberate misstatement, or of shameful and inexcusable ignorance. What, then, are we to think of Lord Beaconsfield when we find that his whole story is inaccurate from beginning to end?

Lord Beaconsfield alludes to the Peerage Bill brought

in by Lord Sunderland. The object of that Bill certainly was to limit the King's power of creating peers; and it may be contended that, as Lord Sunderland was the head of a Whig Government, the Whig party share with him the responsibility of the measure. That does not at all follow. The Minister of a party may, and often has, brought in a measure which his own party condemn, and Ministers have, we all know, often for this reason been driven from office by the votes of their own friends. Will it be contended that when a party proves the sincerity of its dislike to a measure by actually throwing out of office the Ministry of its own friends, it does not purge itself absolutely of all responsibility for the measure? The Whig party in the House of Commons did not turn out the Government of Lord Sunderland, but it gave it a severe check. I appeal to a Tory historian, the late Lord Stanhope, as to whom the credit of defeating the Peerage Bill belongs. "But by far the most splendid speech," he writes, "on that occasion was that of Walpole, and it may, in fact, be doubted if any harangue of so much eloquence and effect had ever yet been delivered in the House of Commons.*

In another passage the same Tory historian tells us that the Whigs, having been at first inclined to favour the bill, gradually came to Walpole's "opinions, and at length agreed to act with him *in a body.*" †

And again, we are told that "on the danger to the

* History of England, i. 545.

† *Ibid.* i. 544.

constitution and to freedom he" (Walpole) "enlarged with all the eloquence of truth." *

"If it be asked," says Lord Stanhope elsewhere,†—"if it be asked on whom the blame of having planned it should mainly rest, it will be found stated by most of the later writers, such as Coxe, that the measure was projected by Lord Sunderland. If we next inquire to whom the praise of defeating this measure is most due, there can, I think, be no doubt that it belongs almost solely and exclusively to Walpole."

The Whigs were at this time in a majority in the House of Commons, and the Whigs, Lord Stanhope tells us—at least, so many of them as followed Sir Robert Walpole's guidance—voted against the Bill "in a body." What, then, can be more opposite to the truth than to attribute the defeat of the measure in the House of Commons to the Tories? Yet, according to Mr. Disraeli, "the House of Commons, *led by the Tory country gentlemen*, rejected the bill with becoming decision."

It is not surprising, after this, to find George III. described as a man "of clear sense" and "strong spirit;" Mr. Pitt as a "democratic minister," and the Tory as "the national party." ‡

A very amusing part of "The Vindication" is a digression, in which, while professing to give a sketch of Bolingbroke, Lord Beaconsfield in reality presents us with a sketch of himself. It will be not uninteresting to follow Lord Beaconsfield for a moment or two

* *Ibid.* i. 546. † *Ibid.* i. 542. ‡ "Vindication," 173.

in his remarks under this head. He begins with the statement that "in the early part of the last century, the Tory party required a similar re-organization to that which it has lately undergone ; and," goes on the Vindicator, "as it is in the nature of human affairs that the individual that is required shall not long be wanting, so in the season of which I am treating, arose a man remarkable in an illustrious age, who, with the splendour of an organizing genius, settled the confused and discordant materials of English faction, and reduced them into a clear and systematic order. This was Lord Bolingbroke. Gifted with that fiery imagination, the teeming fertility of whose inventive resources is as necessary to a great statesman or a great general, as to a great poet, the ablest writer and the most accomplished orator of his age, that rare union that in a country of free Parliaments and a free press, insures to its possessor the privilege of exercising a constant influence over the mind of his country, that rare union that has rendered Burke so memorable ; blending with that intuitive knowledge of his race which creative minds alone enjoy, all the wisdom that can be derived from literature, and a comprehensive experience of human affairs—no one was better qualified to be the minister of a free and powerful nation than Henry St. John; and Destiny at first appeared to combine with Nature in the elevation of his fortunes." *

The reader will not have failed to notice the strong likeness which Lord Beaconsfield perceives between

* *Ibid.* 185-6.

Bolingbroke and himself. They are both men of "organizing genius," and of "fiery imagination," and Bolingbroke, like Lord Beaconsfield, was as ready with his pen as with his tongue. But the likeness grows even stronger as the history proceeds. Bolingbroke was "opposed to the Whigs from principle, *for an oligarchy is hostile to genius.*" He recoiled "from the Tory tenets, which his unprejudiced and vigorous mind taught him at the same time to dread and to condemn;" and the result was that "at the outset of his career" he "incurred the commonplace imputation of insincerity and inconsistency."* How like was the fate of the candidate alternately for Wycombe and Taunton, and as a Radical in the one and a Tory in the other place.

"It is probable," continues Lord Beaconsfield, "that in the earlier years of his career he meditated over the formation of a new party—that dream of youthful ambition in a perplexed and discordant age;" the same dream, in fact, as Lord Beaconsfield himself had when he returned from Jerusalem in 1832 to save England. "More experienced in political life," Lord Bolingbroke "discovered that he had only to choose between the Whigs and the Tories;" just as Lord Beaconsfield ceased in 1834 to be "mighty impartial," fearing that the Radical card would not turn up trumps.

Mark what follows: it would almost look as if Lord Beaconsfield had the gift of second sight,—was able at this early stage to forecast his own career:—

* *Ibid.* 186-7.

"*From the moment that Lord Bolingbroke, in becoming a Tory, embraced the national cause, he devoted himself absolutely to his party: all the energies of his Protean mind were lavished in their service; . . . . his inspiring pen . . . . eradicated from Toryism all those absurd and odious doctrines which Toryism had adventitiously adopted, clearly developed its essential and permanent character, discarded* jure divino, *demolished passive obedience, threw to the winds the doctrine of non-resistance, placed the abolition of James and the accession of George on their right basis and, in the complete re-organization of the public mind laid the foundation for the future accession of the Tory party to power, and to that popular and triumphant career which must ever await the policy of an administration inspired by the spirit of our free and ancient institutions.*"*

So the cat is out of the bag—at last! We now know the secret of Mr. Disraeli's admiration for Bolingbroke. Bolingbroke "eradicated all those absurd and odious doctrines" which make Toryism ridiculous; "discarded" its first and chief dogma; "threw to the winds" the rest, and so "laid the foundation" for "the accession of" the Tory party to power. To sum up, Mr. Disraeli admires Lord Bolingbroke because, *being a Tory leader, he induced the Tory party to abandon every single Tory principle, and so brought it to power.*

Now I believe that the principle of party obligation laid down as worthy of imitation in this panegyric of Bolingbroke is utterly false. Hallam tells us that

* *Ibid.* 187-8.

Lord Bolingbroke's "Dissertations on Parties," and "Letters on the History of England," are written on Whig principles; and Lord Beaconsfield expresses precisely the same opinion, though his language is not quite so frank. And the result of this adoption of Whig principles by the Tory party was their advent to power.

Is Lord Beaconsfield right in contending that such a line of conduct in the Tory party is worthy of praise?

The question of party obligation, however it may have been complicated by party and personal dishonesty, and other circumstances, is essentially a simple question.

First, what is meant by the advent of a party to "power" under a representative Government? Does it not mean that the nation has decided to give the party an opportunity of putting its principles into the form of legislation?

Again: is not "power" a pleasant possession? And must it not be regarded as a *reward* for political success?

If this be the proper view of "power," a Tory Ministry has no right to carry Liberal measures, nor a Liberal Ministry to carry Tory measures.

But Ministers have frequently acted on a different principle in the history of this country, and their conduct has found many defenders. It is said, for instance, that a Tory or Liberal Minister may have changed his mind, and have come honestly to believe

that the measure he formerly denounced as ruinous to the State, will really be most beneficial. In that case, an honest Minister should surrender his post. The man who had fought and won the battle should also wear the crown. Statesmen who complain of their sad fate in being compelled to retain power by passing measures they had once opposed, appear to me to be talking in the language of canting hypocrisy.

But these are not the views which Lord Beaconsfield expresses on party obligations in his "Vindication." And he is not satisfied with excusing abandonment of principle by the Tories in the eighteenth century, and by Lord Bolingbroke. He equally admires the abandonment of principle by the Tories of the nineteenth century, and by Sir Robert Peel. "If," he writes in the "Vindication,"* "in confirmation of the argument which I have been pursuing, I appeal to the measures brought forward by Sir Robert Peel and the Cabinet, in which your Lordship held the Great Seal of England, as evidence that the Tories are not opposed to measures of political amelioration, *I shall perhaps be met with that famous dilemma of insincerity or apostasy* which was urged during the last general election on the Whig hustings, with an air of irrefutable triumph, which, had it been better grounded, had been less amusing. *I will grant that Sir Robert Peel and his colleagues had previously resisted the measures which they then proposed.* But, in the interval, the third estate of the realm had been recon-

* 199-200.

structed, and preponderating influence had been given to a small class *who would not support any Ministry unprepared to carry such measures. If once the Tories admitted that it was impossible for them to propose the adoption of these measures, they simultaneously admitted that they could never again exercise power; they conceded to the Whigs a monopoly of power, under the specious title of a monopoly of Reform;* and the oligarchy against which we had so long struggled, would finally have been established. *Was this the duty of Sir Robert Peel and his colleagues?*"

The reader will find, before long, that on absolutely the same question raised in these sentences, Lord Beaconsfield pronounces a diametrically opposite opinion; that he condemns the same man whom he here approves, for precisely similar conduct; and that, of all voices, his was the loudest in shouting the "famous dilemma of insincerity or apostasy."

"The Vindication" brought Mr. Disraeli into a new quarrel.

The *Globe* published in its issue of Christmas Day, 1835, a very caustic review of Mr. Disraeli's essay. In this review the absurdities of the work were exposed, and, in addition, allusions by no means complimentary were made to the political inconsistencies of the writer's own career. "It may be within the recollection," writes the *Globe*, "of a few of those by whom the actions of the eminent men of this nether world are observed, that not many months ago Mr. Disraeli professed himself to be an

out-and-out democrat, and held Radicalism as an almost perfect embodiment of the democratic principal, to Whiggism and Toryism alike abhorrent. Imbued with these opinions, and influenced no doubt by patriotism of the purest water, the democrat beseeched Mr. O'Connell to permit him the 'high honour'—such was the phrase—'of becoming a part of his tail.'"

"Now," continues the *Globe*, "in his hunt after the residence of the true democratic principle, Mr. Disraeli has somehow or other stumbled upon Lord Lyndhurst. What he *wants* from the learned ex-Chancellor we do not take upon us to say. But here is a letter of two hundred pages, or thereabouts, addressed to the noble lord for the express purpose of proving, not merely that the author is still a thorough democrat, but that democracy is the genuine and essential principle of Torvism itself! . . . . Disraeli's asking a seat in Parliament from O'Connell, and Disraeli suing for the favour of Lord Lyndhurst are identical—the democratic principle is the impelling power, nothing else."

And then the *Globe* entered into a criticism of the "Vindication" itself.

It is not usually considered dignified in an author to answer a review of his work. The only case in which he is permitted by strict literary etiquette to do so, is when the review is either extraordinarily violent, or grossly incorrect in its statement of fact.

But in the sentences just quoted from the review in the *Globe* there is no great bitterness, and the statements are correct. No ordinary author would,

therefore, have felt himself justified in making a reply.

But Mr. Disraeli did not feel himself bound to act with the dignity or reserve which is expected from other men. Partly from his restless vanity, and partly from calculation, he scarcely ever allowed an allusion to him to pass unnoticed. That was part of his plan of always keeping himself before the public eye.

The very evening the review appeared, Mr. Disraeli wrote a reply, which was addressed to the editor of the *Globe*. "Your assertions," wrote Mr. Disraeli in one paragraph of his letter, "that I applied to O'Connell to return me to Parliament, and that he treated that application with irreverent and undisguised contempt, are quite untrue. I never made any application to Mr. O'Connell to return me to Parliament; and the only time I ever met Mr. O'Connell, which was in society, he treated me with a courtesy which I trust I returned."

In reply, the *Globe* said it had dealt with this passage in Mr. Disraeli's career, "months ago, without contradiction." Still, although its "tenderness towards volatile insects disinclines" it "to break a butterfly on a wheel oftener than necessary," it will take up Mr. Disraeli's challenge. Accordingly, in its issue of December 28, it published that speech of O'Connell's in reply to Mr. Disraeli's attack at Taunton, which the reader has already seen.

The repetition of O'Connell's terrible sneer at his nationality provoked Mr. Disraeli into one of those fits

of almost insane abuse which were characteristic of his early days. He wrote a letter to the *Times*,* which is one of the most abusive productions ever written. The writer in the *Globe* is described as a "thing" who "concocts" "meagre sentences," and "drivels out" "rheumy rhetoric." "I will not say with Macbeth," writes Mr. Disraeli, "that I shall 'fall by none of woman born,' but this I will declare, that the Whig Samson shall never silence me by 'the jaw of an ass.'"

Mr. Disraeli goes on to declare that "every letter of every syllable of the paragraph quoted in its" (the *Globe's*) "columns from Mr. O'Connell's speech is an unadulterated falsehood, from my novels, which the *de facto* member for Dublin learnedly informs us are styled the 'Curiosities of Literature,'† *to his letter to me, which was never written, and which he assures me was lithographed throughout Wycombe.*"

This marvellous statement will certainly cause the reader, who has seen the previous chapters, to open his eyes very widely indeed. The letter of O'Connell has been given in an early chapter.‡ While the writer, it will be remembered, stated that he had no personal acquaintance at Wycombe, he at the same time expressed the utmost confidence in the sincerity of Mr. Disraeli's attachment to Reform, admiration of his abilities, and

* Dec. 31, 1835.

† O'Connell, according to the report of his speech quoted in the *Globe*, made this mistake, confounding the works of the elder and younger Disraeli. No such error occurs in the speech as given in the report quoted *ante*.

‡ See *ante*, 48-9.

an earnest desire for his success. How, then, can Mr. Disraeli assert that "every letter of every syllable" in the *Globe's* quotation from O'Connell's speech is "an unadulteratod falsehood"?

Here is the explanation he gives in a subsequent part of his letter. "Our contest at Wycombe was a very warm one; every vote was an object. *A friend of mine, interested in my success, knowing that I was supported by that portion of the constituents styled Radicals, applied to Mr. O'Connell and Mr. Hume, with whom he was intimately acquainted, to know whether they had any influence in Wycombe, and requested them to exercise it in my favour. They had none; and they expressed their regret in letters to that gentleman, who forwarded them to me at Wycombe; and my committee, consisting of so many Tories and Radicals, printed them. This is the history of my connection with Mr. O'Connell.*"

Compare this denial with the preface to the denial. Mr. Disraeli was not satisfied with saying that Mr. O'Connell's account contained many inaccuracies, or even with saying that, while a small portion of it was correct, the greater portion of it was grossly incorrect. No: "Every letter of every syllable" in Mr. O'Connell's account was "an unadulterated falsehood." Nothing less than this would satisfy the calumniated Mr. Disraeli. Yet does not his own account show the substantial accuracy of Mr. O'Connell's statement?

O'Connell makes three assertions: (1) that Mr. Disraeli applied to him for a letter; (2) that Mr. Disraeli applied as a Radical reformer; and (3) that the letter written

in obedience to Mr. Disraeli's request was placarded in his interest over Wycombe.

Mr. Disraeli, beginning with the statement that "every letter of every syllable" in this account is "an unadulterated falsehood," ends by making three admissions. He admits (1) that a friend of his applied to O'Connell for a recommendation to Wycombe; (2) that his friend did so for the purpose of gaining some of the Wycombe Radicals; and (3) that his committee had O'Connell's letter, given in obedience to this request, placarded over Wycombe. Compare the three admissions of Mr. Disraeli and the three statements of O'Connell: do they not tell practically the very same tale?

"Even had it been," Mr. Disraeli goes on, "in the power of Mr. O'Connell and Mr. Hume to have interposed in my favour at Wycombe, my political allegiance would not have been the expected consequence of their assistance. Those gentlemen would have aided me from the principles I professed and the measures I advocated in my address, and with a perfect acquaintance of the political position I had assumed. They knew—at least one of them—that I had declined a distinct recommendation to another constituency, *where my return would have been secure*,* because I avowed my resolution to enter the House of Commons un-

* The reader will have learned too well by this time to take Mr. Disraeli's assertions *cum grano salis*, to attach complete belief to this bold statement. If Mr. Disraeli could have been returned so early as 1832, why was he unable to gain an entrance to Parliament until 1837, and until he had been *four times* defeated?

shackled. *They were perfectly aware that the Tory party supported me in the borough, because some members of the Ministry, panting and pale, had actually knocked them up one night to request them to exert their influence against me on that score*, and *they were well apprised* that if I was returned I should offer a hostility, without exception, to every measure proposed by the Government."

Let us examine these statements* with regard to the terms on which Hume and O'Connell gave him their support. They gave that support, Mr. Disraeli asserts, in the full knowledge that he was hostile to the Whigs, and that he was supported by the Tories. And, in proof of this statement, he relates or invents a story of their having been knocked up one night by "some members of the Ministry, panting and pale," in order that they might withdraw their support.

But see how utterly dishonest Mr. Disraeli's defence is. It does not mention that Mr. Hume *did* withdraw his support, on learning, whether through Ministers,

* I should not omit to give this extraordinary passage from this epistle. "I am not surprised, and assuredly not terrified, by the hostility of the Whigs. They may keep me out of Parliament, but they cannot deprive me of one means of influencing public opinion as long as in this country there is a free press—a blessing which, had they succeeded in Louis Philipizing the country, as they intended, would not, however, have long afforded us its salutary protection. I feel that I have darted at least one harpoon in the floundering sides of the Whig leviathan. All his roaring and all his bellowing, his foaming mouth and his lashing tail, will not daunt me. I know it is the roar of agony, and the bellow of anticipated annihilation, the foam of frenzy, and the contortions of despair. I dared to encounter the monster when he was undoubted monarch of the waters, and it would indeed be weakness to shrink from a collision with him now, in this merited moment of his awful and impending dissolution."

"panting and pale," or otherwise, Mr. Disraeli's real character. The reader still remembers the second letter of Mr. Hume, in which he revoked his recommendation. And Mr. Disraeli will afterwards be found bitterly complaining of the very fact that Mr. Hume retired from his position of friendliness to one of hostility.

Mr. Disraeli endeavours after a fashion, of which the reader will see many examples, to confound two separate things. He endeavours to confound Mr. Hume's conduct in the first instance and his conduct subsequently. Mr. Disraeli suggests that Mr. Hume supported him when he had a full knowledge of Mr. Disraeli's Toryism. The real fact is that Mr. Hume supported Mr. Disraeli so long as he thought him a Radical, and opposed him the moment he found him to be a Tory.

There is no proof, it is true, that O'Connell withdrew the support he gave to Mr. Disraeli. But there is no proof that he was warned of Mr. Disraeli's character before the end of the election had made it too late for him to take back his letter.

Mr. Disraeli says that, among other evidences of his principles, O'Connell and Hume had his address before them. The suggestion evidently is that the address contained Tory declarations. It happens, unfortunately for Mr. Disraeli, that we have other testimony besides his, as to what the character of that address was. Mr. Disraeli has told us that the applications for support to Hume and O'Connell were made by a friend. That

friend was Mr. E. L. Bulwer (Lord Lytton). Mr. Bulwer, on being appealed to as to what was the character in which Mr. Disraeli had asked for his support at Wycombe, declared emphatically that it was as a "Reformer," or, as we now call it, Radical. And he adds the important fact that the ground of this opinion was a "printed handbill," in which Mr. Disraeli explained his opinions. "*I showed that handbill,*" proceeds Mr. Bulwer, "to Mr. Hume ; *hence the letters of that gentleman and others.**

Let us compare this letter with Mr. Disraeli's representation of his relations with Hume and O'Connell. "Even had it been in the power of Mr. O'Connell and Mr. Hume," wrote Mr. Disraeli, "to have interposed in

* From the *Globe*, Jan. 7, 1836. "The friend in question was Mr. Bulwer. When Mr. Disraeli was standing for Taunton, a solicitor of that town, Mr. Cox, exposed him in two or three really excellently written pamphlets. To this gentleman's kindness we are indebted for copies of those works, which he forwarded to us at our request. In the last of these there is a letter from Mr. Bulwer to Mr. Cox, which we now give 'London, July 24, 1835. Sir,—In answer to your letter, I beg to say that Mr. Disraeli first referred me to *a printed handbill of his own, espousing short Parliaments, vote by ballot, and untaxed knowledge. I conceive these principles to be the polestar of the sincere reformers, and to be the reverse of Tory ones. I showed that handbill to Mr. Hume, hence the letters of that gentleman and others.* Mr. Disraeli does not deny that he professed those opinions at the time, but he has explained since that he intended them for adoption, not against the Tories, but Whigs. With his explanation I have nothing to do. I question his philosophy, but I do not doubt his honour. When any man tells me that he votes for ballot, short Parliaments, and the abolition of taxes on knowledge, I can only suppose him to be a reformer, and such being my principles, I would always give him my support, and I should never dream of asking whether he called himself a Radical or a Tory.—I am, etc., E. L. BULWER.—To Edward Cox, Esq.'"

my favour at Wycombe, *my political allegiance would not have been the expected consequence of their assistance.* These gentlemen would have aided me from the principles I professed and the measures I *advocated in my address.*" Which principles in which address Mr. Bulwer tells us were "the reverse of Tory ones." Yet Mr. Disraeli has asserted that O'Connell and Hume knew him to have been partly a Tory, *from his address.*

Mr. Disraeli replied to the *Globe's* production of Mr. Bulwer's letter by a lengthy and very abusive epistle in the *Times.** I pass over all parts of this letter, excepting the portion which refers to Mr. Hume. In reference to his relations with that gentleman, Mr. Disraeli makes two statements :—

1. "I repeat that Mr. Hume's letter, to which the editor of the *Globe* originally alluded, was addressed to a third person."

2. "All the details about my introduction to Mr. Hume, with a letter from Mr. Bulwer, and my frequent conferences with Mr. Hume at his house, are, as usual with the *Globe*, utter falsehoods. I never saw Mr. Hume but once in my life, that was at the House

* *January* 9, 1836. Here is a specimen of the style :—"It is not, then, my passion for notoriety that has induced me to tweak the editor of the *Globe* by the nose, and to inflict sundry kicks upon the baser part of his base body; to make him eat dirt, and his own words, fouler than any filth, but because I wished to show to the world what a miserable poltroon, what a craven dullard, what a literary scarecrow, what a mere thing, stuffed with straw and rubbish, is the *soi-disant* director of public opinion and official organ of Whig politics."

of Commons; the object of that interview was to request an explanation of the circumstance which I have mentioned, and to that circumstance the interview was confined."

Mr. Disraeli remarks in this last letter, that Mr. Hume had "never attacked" him. It speaks greatly for Mr. Hume's forbearance that he should have kept silent up to this. Here was the man whom he had recommended as a Radical, going about the country as a Tory, attacking with the greatest violence, on the hustings, in the newspapers, and in a pamphlet of more than two hundred pages, the party and the men whose favour he had sought; yet Mr. Hume never said a word.

He had, however, been at last provoked from his silence, and one crushing proof more was added to the mass of evidence already given of Mr. Disraeli's tergiversation.

In its issue of January 11, 1836, the *Globe* produced two letters—one from Mr. Walter Scott, Mr. Joseph Hume's secretary, the other from Mr. Hume himself.

Mr. Disraeli declared, as has been seen, that he had not called on Mr. Hume to solicit his support at Wycombe; Mr. Scott asserts, on the contrary, that he has a distinct recollection of Mr. Disraeli having made such a call. Mr. Disraeli denies that he sought Mr. Hume's support as an adherent of Mr. Hume; Mr. Scott declares, on the contrary, that Mr. Disraeli made a "general profession of his political principles,

which he stated were in accordance with those Mr. Hume is well known to advocate." And then Mr. Scott gives a reason why this particular visit of this particular applicant made an impression on his memory. He might, he says, have forgotten Mr. Disraeli's interview with Mr. Hume, "*but for the circumstance of a friend of Mr. Hume's stating in a blunt way, on hearing what he had done, that he was very wrong in doing so, as Mr. Disraeli was a d——d Tory, and that Mr. Hume would soon find him so.*"

This evidence is surely circumstantial enough, has all the appearance of truth, and would be at once believed if we had not in opposition to it the always trustworthy testimony of Lord Beaconsfield. Let us, therefore, in order to equalise the unequal contest between two such witnesses as Mr. Scott and Lord Beaconsfield, bring forward another person to Mr. Scott's assistance.

Mr. Joseph Hume's "impression certainly is that he" —Mr. Disraeli—"did call on me in Bryanston Square to solicit my support as a candidate for Wycombe." He then relates the circumstances under which he wrote the letter of recommendation with which Mr. Disraeli approached the Wycombe electors. He wrote it at the request of Mr. Bulwer, who vouched for Mr. Disraeli's principles; and Mr. Hume encloses the letter of thanks which Mr. Disraeli returned.

And, now, let us see what Mr. Hume has to say on another point in the controversy.

"To the second question, 'Whether Mr. Disraeli

gave me to understand that he was a Tory or a Radical?' *I can state, with perfect confidence, that I understood from Mr. Disraeli that he was an ardent supporter and a zealous advocate of my general political principles; and that, if he should obtain a seat in Parliament, he would support them there.* If my letter to Mr. Disraeli is not sufficiently explicit as to that point, every person who has watched my political conduct must be satisfied that I never would have put my pen to paper in any other belief. . . . . I expressed in my letter to Mr. Disraeli a hope that all the reformers would rally round him as the man who entertained Liberal principles "on every branch of government, and was prepared to support reform and economy in every department."

So far, Mr. Hume confines himself to his own testimony; but next he brings forward evidence supplied by Mr. Disraeli himself.

"If," he writes, "there had been any doubt in my mind of Mr. Disraeli having professed himself unequivocally a Liberal, the following paragraph in a letter of his of the 8th of June to me, announcing the resignation of Sir Thomas Baring, must have convinced me. 'I think, after what has passed, I have some claim upon you and your friends, to prevent *any split in the Liberal party here*, and any stranger from coming down to oppose me.'"

And, finally, Mr. Hume contradicts the assertion of Mr. Disraeli that he had not written to him direct, but to a third person on his behalf.

Among the enclosures in Mr. Hume's letter was the following letter from Mr. Disraeli:—

"Bradenham House, Wycombe,
"Tuesday, June 5th, 1832.

'Sir,—I have had the honour and gratification of receiving your letter this morning. Accept my sincere, my most cordial thanks.

"It will be my endeavour that you shall not repent the confidence you have reposed in me.

"Believe me, Sir, that if it be my fortune to be returned in the present instance to a reformed Parliament, I shall remember with satisfaction that that return is mainly attributable to the interest expressed in my success by one of the most distinguished and able of our citizens.

"I have the honour to be, Sir,
"Your obliged and faithful servant,
"(Signed) B. DISRAELI.

"Joseph Hume, Esq., M.P."

It is needless to comment at any length on an exposure so complete. Almost every single one of Mr. Disraeli's assertions is met by a direct negative; and the direct negative is proved.

Mr. Disraeli said he did not call on Mr. Hume to ask his recommendation to Wycombe; Mr. Hume, supported by Mr. Hume's secretary, says that he did. Mr. Disraeli asserted that Mr. Hume had written to a third party; Mr. Hume shows that he had written to Mr. Disraeli direct. Finally, Mr. Disraeli suggested that Mr. Hume knew he was partially a Tory; Mr. Hume proves that Mr. Disraeli applied to him as a Radical Reformer.

This last point is very important. I have been at some pains to show in a previous chapter that Lord

Beaconsfield when he stood for Wycombe in 1832, stood as a Liberal. I argued that his abuse of the Whigs was to be taken as a proof, not of Toryism, but of a more ardent—as opposed to a lukewarm—Liberalism; that, in fact, it was to be classed with the talk of men who are Radical as distinct from Whig members of the Liberal party. And I also pointed to the fact that "Reformer" was the political term which in 1832 answered to the term Radical of our days. Still the omission of the distinct term, Liberal, might be made use of by those who are anxious to find some possible or impossible loophole of escape from the charge of tergiversation against Lord Beaconsfield. The letter of Mr. Disraeli, quoted by Mr. Hume, takes away even that last refuge. "If there had been any doubt," writes Mr. Hume, "in my mind of Mr. Disraeli having professed himself *unequivocally a Liberal,* the following paragraph in a letter of *his* of the 8th of June, to me, announcing the resignation of Sir Thomas Baring, must have convinced me: "I think, after what has passed, I have some claim upon you and your friends, to prevent any split *in the Liberal party.*" Here Mr. Disraeli uses one of the recognised and unmistakable terms by which is designated a man's choice between the two political parties of the country. Can any one, after this, deny that when Mr. Disraeli stood as a Reformer at Wycombe, he stood distinctly as a member of the Liberal party?

It will have been observed that the *Globe* throughout this controversy, for the most part, confines itself

to mere statement of fact. When it has gone into the region of controversy, its tone cannot be described as vehement, and certainly not as abusive. The letter of Mr. Joseph Hume is written in the same spirit. It is an impartial, it might even be called bald narration of fact.

What, on the contrary, is the tone of Lord Beaconsfield's replies? They are violently abusive; and they are constantly running away from the facts in dispute to the region of personalities. Lord Beaconsfield has evidently been of opinion that if a man can only shout loud enough and often enough, and with a sufficiently bold face, his most baseless assertions and his most absurd arguments will be taken as true by the careless of men; and his career is certainly strong proof that, in so thinking, he has accurately estimated mankind.

He replies to the temperate letter of Mr. Hume by a letter addressed, through the *Times*,* to that gentleman himself. The reply is full of violent personal abuse, but there are only one or two assertions which are worthy of attention.

He reiterates that he only saw Mr. Hume once, and that their meeting took place at the House of Commons. But immediately after, he acknowledges that during his Marylebone canvass he called at Mr. Hume's house; adding, however, that Mr. Hume was too ill to receive him. These admissions really amount to a practical confirmation, instead of a com-

* January 12, 1836.

plete reputation, as Mr. Disraeli loudly asserts, of the assertions of the *Globe*. The locality of the meeting between Mr. Disraeli and Mr. Hume was not, of course, the real point of the controversy between the newspaper and Mr. Disraeli. The essential question was whether a meeting took place at all between the Radical leader and the young aspirant; and whether the existing *protégé* of Lord Lyndhurst should have a few years before been ready to become the *protégé* of Joseph Hume. The introduction, therefore, of the discussion as to the place of meeting is simply another instance of Lord Beaconsfield's favourite expedient—the expedient of diverting attention from the main and important to a subsidiary and trifling point.

I have said that the letter was violently abusive. Mr. Hume is described as a "man who, after having scraped together a fortune by jobbing in Government contracts in a colony, and entering the House of Commons as the Tory representative of a close corporation, suddenly becomes the apostle of economy and unrestricted suffrage, and closes a career, commenced and matured in corruption, by spouting sedition in Middlesex and counselling rebellion in Canada." And this vehement abuse of Mr. Joseph Hume occurs in the very letter in which Mr. Disraeli acknowledges that he had twice sought Mr. Hume's political patronage! But this is one of the most curious and one of the worst characteristics in Lord Beaconsfield's career. No sense of past alliance, no memory of favours asked and received, of loud-mouthed and even mean-spirited

eulogium, has prevented him from heaping the most vindictive and usually most unjust attacks on other public men. The air rings with his cries of hate before the echoes of his shouts of praise have died away. Notable instances have already been given of this system of alternately shameless praise and shameless abuse of the very same men; of savage bites at the same hand that but a short season before was fawningly kissed. As our narrative proceeds, a still more remarkable, more memorable, and even more shameless instance of this line of conduct towards individuals will be given. What is the only, the inevitable conclusion from such facts in Lord Beaconsfield's life? What, but that all his actions towards others have been solely dictated by his own personal interests; that his professions of uncalculating affection were mere disguised selfishness; that his simple and sole desire has been to use all other men for his own purposes?

The very day after the appearance of his self-confident and insulting letter to Mr. Joseph Hume, Mr. Disraeli was himself compelled to supply the most damning proof of his untrustworthiness as a narrator of facts. One of the many points in dispute between him, the *Globe*, and Mr. Joseph Hume, was as to whether the letter of the latter was addressed to him direct, or through a third person. Several times over Mr. Disraeli had repeated the assertion that the note reached him indirectly. In a letter to the *Times*,* he has

* January 18, 1836.

to unequivocally acknowledge his error, and to admit that Mr. Hume's letter was, as the *Globe* and Mr. Hume had asserted, directed to himself.

In the course of this book, we shall be drawn by Lord Beaconsfield into a discussion on the personal veracity and the political consistency of more than one public man. We shall also be asked by Lord Beaconsfield to pronounce judgment on the conduct of more than one public man, towards former friends and colleagues.

These are the very questions we have just been considering in the case of Lord Beaconsfield himself. Lord Beaconsfield's personal veracity, Lord Beaconsfield's political consistency, Lord Beaconsfield's conduct to former friends and colleagues, are all involved in his dispute with the *Globe*. When he asks us to test other men on those three points, it is not useless to know how he himself came out of a similar examination.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MAIDEN SPEECH.

The last letter of Mr. Disraeli to the *Times* in his controversy with the *Globe* was published on January 13. On January 19 appeared the first of a series of letters signed "Runnymede." These letters have never been publicly acknowledged by Lord Beaconsfield; but they bear a strong resemblance in style to other productions from his pen. The letters are addressed to the leading public men of the day; and are in two different styles. When they are directed to a Whig, they are grossly abusive; when to a Conservative, they are as grossly adulatory.

Lord Melbourne is told that he cannot rouse himself "from the embraces of that Siren Desidia, to whose fatal influence you are not less a slave than our second Charles." * "At present," Runnymede says, writing to Lord Brougham—"I am informed that your lordship is occupied in a translation of your treatise on Natural Theology into German on the Hamiltonian system. The translation of a work on a

* *Times*, January 19, 1836.

subject of which you know little, into a tongue of which you know nothing, seems the climax of those fantastic freaks of ambitious superficiality which our lively neighbours describe by a finer term than quackery."*

Lord John Russell is told that he was "born with a strong ambition and a feeble intellect;" that he is the author of "the feeblest tragedy in our language," "the feeblest romance in our literature," and "the feeblest political essay on record." He is "cold, inanimate, with a weak voice and a mincing manner;" and finally, if a traveller were informed that such a man was leader of the English House of Commons, he "may begin to comprehend how the Egyptians worshipped an INSECT." †

Addressing Lord Palmerston,‡ "Runnymede" says: "You owe the Whigs great gratitude, my lord, and therefore, I think, you will betray them."

Let me pause to ask if "Runnymede," when he wrote this, were drawing a general inference from a particular case? Did he think political betrayal always followed political obligation, because Mr. Disraeli had been so lately shown to have betrayed O'Connell and Joseph Hume?

The letter to Lord Palmerston, towards the end, contains this fine burst: "Oh, my country! fortunate, thrice fortunate, England! with your destines at such a moment entrusted to the Lord Fanny of diplomacy!

* *Ibid.*, January 25. † *Ibid.*, February 1.
‡ *Ibid.*, February 22.

Methinks I can see your lordship, the Sporus of politics, cajoling France with an airy compliment, and menacing Russia with a perfumed cane."

Sir John Hobhouse, the friend of Byron, was also assailed.* "Runnymede" was inexpressibly shocked at seeing a Radical like Hobhouse sitting on the same bench with an ex-Tory like Palmerston. "Runnymede" did not, like Mr. Disraeli, think that the Tory party was the really democratic party, and could, therefore, be supported by men of Radical principles. "You have met, indeed," writes the uncompromising and elegant-spoken "Runnymede"—"you have met, indeed, like the Puritan and the Prostitute on the banks of Lethe, in Garrick's farce, with an equally convenient oblivion of the characteristic incidents of your previous careers; you giving up your annual Parliaments and universal suffrage, he casting to the winds his close corporations and borough nominees; you whispering Conservatism on the hustings once braying with your revolutionary uproar, he spouting Reform in the still recesses of the dust of Downing Street; the one reeking from a Newgate cell, the other redolent of the *boudoirs* of Mayfair—yet both of them, alike the Tory underling and the Radical demagogue, closing the ludicrous contrast with one grand diapason of harmonious inconsistency, both merging in the Whig Minister."

In striking contrast to the tone of those letters to the Whig leaders is that† to Sir Robert Peel, the

* *Ibid.*, March 2. † *Ibid.*, January 27, 1836.

Conservative chief. Not only is Peel complimented on his own extraordinary virtues, but allusion is made, in a manner equally characteristic and vulgar, to the great man's material prosperity. "Before you receive this letter," says the enthusiastic and Jenkins-like admirer of the Conservative leader,—"Before you receive this letter, you will, in all probability, have quitted the halls and bowers of Drayton; those gardens and that library where you have realized the romance of Verulam, and where you enjoy the 'lettered leisure' that Temple loved."

Then the very commonplace incident of Peel's journey to London is described in a manner that might make a penny-a-liner burst with envy. The journey of such a great man is not called a journey at all: it is a "*progress* to the metropolis." That "progress," Peel is then told, "may not be as picturesque as that which you experienced twelve months back, when the confidence of your Sovereign and the hopes of your country summoned you from the galleries of the Vatican and the city of the Cæsars. It may not be as picturesque, but it is not less proud —it will be more triumphant."

Rising to a Mœnadic frenzy of eulogium as he goes along, the eulogist styles Peel "the only hope of a suffering people." Then, Whiggery is described in terms that one cannot read without laughter. "The mighty dragon is again abroad, *depopulating our fields, wasting our pleasant places, poisoning our fountains, menacing our civilisation.*"

"In your chivalry alone," writes "Runnymede," "is our hope. *Clad in the panoply of your splendid talents and your spotless character*, we feel assured that you will subdue this unnatural and unnational monster, and that we may yet see sedition and treason and rapine, rampant as they may have of late figured, quail before your power and prowess."

And thus the Conservative Premier is contrasted with a Whig predecessor :—

"You retained your post until you found you were endangering the King's prerogative, to support which you had alone accepted His Majesty's confidence. What a contrast does your administration as Prime Minister afford to that of one of your recent predecessors! No selfish views, no family aggrandizement, no family jobs, no nepotism. . . . . Contrast the serene retirement of Drayton, and the repentant solitude of Howick; contrast the statesman cheered after his factious defeat by the sympathy of a nation, with the coroneted Necker, the worn-out Machiavel wringing his helpless hands over his hearth in remorseful despair, and looking up with a sigh at his scowling ancestors! Pitt himself, in the plenitude of his power, never enjoyed more cordial confidence than that which is now extended to you by every alleged section of the Conservative ranks." And so on.

Any comment on the tone and taste of these letters would be altogether out of place. I leave the reader to form his own estimate of the man who could write such letters, with this sole comment: that there is scarcely

a single one of the persons named in those letters of whom Lord Beaconsfield did not find it convenient some time afterwards to pronounce a diametrically opposite verdict. I need not, after what I have recently said on this feature in Lord Beaconsfield's career, and in face of the things I shall have to say by-and-by, further dwell on this point here.

I pass on to the Maidstone election. When Parliament was dissolved in 1837, in consequence of the death of William IV., the constituency was contested by Mr. Wyndham Lewis and Mr. Disraeli. Mr. Wyndham Lewis, a dull but rich man, had represented the place before.

Mr. Disraeli first issued an address on his own account; but a few days afterwards, a combination having been formed between Mr. Lewis and himself, a joint proclamation was put forth. In these addresses, Mr. Disraeli appears as a Conservative *pur sang*, and echoes all the commonplaces of Conservatism in the true tones.*

At a special meeting of the Maidstone Constitutional Society, which took place on July 11, Mr. Disraeli made a long speech, in which he further enlarged on his political principles, and gave a version of his former

* Let us laugh for a moment at the comedy of these addresses. Hear the man who described himself as an "adventurer, alike unconnected with" the English people "in blood or in love," declare himself "an uncompromising adherent to that ancient constitution which once was the boast of *our* fathers,"—"our fathers" is very fine,—"and is still the blessing of their children." Let us also reverentially uncover our heads as this descendant of unbroken generations of

relations with O'Connell. With this account of an unfortunate episode in his career I cannot cumber the main body of my narrative, further than to say that it is grossly and palpably incorrect; that it disagrees with admitted facts; and that it is in direct contradiction, not only to what other people had said on the same subject, but with what Mr. Disraeli had actually himself written on previous occasions.*

The opponent of Mr. Disraeli was Colonel Perronet Thompson, the once famous author of the "Corn Law

Hebrews declares his conviction that "the reformed religion, as by law established in this country, is at the same time the best guarantee for religious toleration and *orthodox purity*"! And, finally, how rustic and solid in his sympathies is this urban literary adventurer, as he proclaims his intention to "on all occasions watch with vigilant solicitude over the fortunes of the British farmer, because," goes on Mr. Disraeli, "I sincerely believe that his welfare is the surest and most permanent basis of general prosperity."

* "In consequence," said Mr. Disraeli at this meeting, "of my violent opposition"—to the Whigs—"the son of the Premier was sent down to contest the borough with me, and it happened that, hearing of the circumstance, Mr. O'Connell wrote a letter to a gentleman in London expressing his interest in the result." By this narrative O'Connell's action at Wycombe is placed in quite a new light. He is represented (1) as giving his support *unsolicited*, and (2) as having done so because Colonel Grey was sent down as a Whig to oppose Mr. Disraeli. Let us compare these statements with admitted facts. First, O'Connell, according to Mr. Disraeli, wrote his letter unsolicited. Here is the first sentence of O'Connell's letter:—"My dear Sir,—*In reply to your inquiry*, I regret to say that I have no acquaintance at Wycombe to whom I could recommend Mr. D'Israeli." And the letter winds up with the remark: "I have no claim on Wycombe, and can only express my surprise that *it should be thought I had any*." Is this the letter of a man who wrote unsolicited? The second assertion is that O'Connell interfered, *after* he had heard that Colonel Grey had gone down to contest Wycombe with Mr. Disraeli. A look at dates will show that this statement is at least improbable. Mr. Disraeli, it will be remembered, was first in the field.

Catechism," and for a time proprietor of the *Westminster Review*.

"Here I am, gentlemen," said Mr. Disraeli at the meeting of the Constitutional Society, "filling the same place, preaching the same doctrine, supporting the same institutions as I did at Wycombe."

It may, I think, be taken for granted that men

The reader will also remember that Mr. Hume wrote two letters on the Wycombe election, the one recommending Mr. Disraeli, and the other declining to interfere with the sitting members. Now, Mr. Hume's second letter—addressed to the Hon. Mr. Smith and Sir Thomas Baring—was dated June 6. It was by the retirement of Sir Thomas Baring that the vacancy was made in Wycombe. It is, therefore, evident that the vacancy did not occur till after June 6. Now, O'Connell's letter is dated June 3, that is to say, in all probability before the candidature of Colonel Grey was heard or thought of. It was on the 13th of June, *eleven days after* O'Connell's letter was written, that Colonel Grey made his public entry into Wycombe. Does that fact bear out the statement that O'Connell's recommendation of June 3 was in consequence of Colonel Grey's candidature? These known and incontrovertible facts are in direct contradiction with Mr. Disraeli's account of his relations with O'Connell. But this is not the whole case against him. His narrative of 1837 is in contradiction, not only with undisputed facts, not only with the narrative of O'Connell, not only with the narrative of the *Globe*, but with the narrative of Mr. Disraeli himself on another occasion.

Here is Mr. Disraeli's account in his letter to the *Times* (December, 1835), which is quoted in the chapter on the *Globe* controversy. [See *ante*, 130.] "Our contest at Wycombe was a very warm one; every vote was an object. A friend of mine, interested in my success, knowing that I was supported by that portion of the constituency styled Radicals, *applied to Mr. O'Connell* and Mr. Hume, with whom he was intimately acquainted, to know whether they had any influence in Wycombe, and *requested them* to exercise it in my favour. They had none, and they expressed their regret in letters to that gentleman, who forwarded them to me at Wycombe." How different is this version from that at Maidstone! And the difference is material, not merely as regards the facts, but also as regards the inferences intended to be drawn. To ask a man for

"filling the same place," and "preaching the same doctrine," do not stand as rival candidates for the same constituency. How, then, reconcile Mr. Disraeli's claim to be exactly the same in principle as he was at Wycombe, when the man whom he now opposes professes the very same opinions which Mr. Disraeli professed at Wycombe!

Colonel Thompson promises to act with Mr. Hume as Mr. Disraeli promised at Wycombe.* He is in favour of Triennial Parliaments, as Mr. Disraeli was.† He is in favour of the Ballot, as Mr. Disraeli was. ‡ Yet

his support is one thing, to receive it without asking is another. Mr. Disraeli wanted the electors of Maidstone to infer that O'Connell, as it were, *obtruded* his aid on him, and that if, therefore, O'Connell afterwards was attacked by Mr. Disraeli, he could make no complaint. He sought Mr. Disraeli; Mr. Disraeli had not sought him. The reader now sees, not only from the overwhelming evidence of facts, but from the words of Mr. Disraeli himself in 1836, that this representation was the very reverse of the truth. It was Mr. Disraeli who sought O'Connell, not O'Connell Mr. Disraeli. "Here I am, gentlemen," says Mr. Disraeli, characteristically, immediately after he had finished this utterly incorrect retrospect, "filling the same place, preaching the same doctrine, supporting the same institutions as I did at Wycombe."

* "The briefest description I can give of the section with which, with inconsiderable exceptions, I have voted, is that *it is the section of Mr. Hume.* I accept the unpopularity which this may procure to me in some directions, for the sake of the confidence it will obtain for me in others."—Extract from Colonel Thompson's address, *Maidstone Journal*, August 1, 1837.

† "Shortening the duration of Parliaments," writes Colonel Thompson in his Maidstone address, "appears to be the readiest mode of settling all differences between an honest representative and his constituents. . . . In the actual position of things, *Triennial Parliaments appear to be the step within reach.*"—*Ibid.*

‡ "On the subject of the Ballot, I beg leave to state that I have been upwards of thirty years an officer in the army, and, when giving

Mr. Disraeli, thus standing before the Maidstone electors as a rival candidate to the man who professes all the articles of his own creed of Wycombe in 1832, claims to be completely consistent!

The nomination took place on Wednesday, July 26. It is unnecessary to make any quotation from Mr. Disraeli's speech, which was clever, egotistic, and violently abusive. At the close of the poll the numbers were—

Lewis	782
Disraeli	668
Thompson	529
Perry	25

And so, after five years of incessant struggle, and oft-repeated defeat, Mr. Disraeli obtained the object of his ambition at last. He will not keep us long waiting to see what use he made of his newly-gained position.

Mr. Disraeli addressed the House of Commons for the first time on the 7th of December, 1837.

Let us take a glance at the House he rose to address. Lord John Russell is the leader of the Whig party, and, at the moment, Secretary of the Home Department. Some doubts are still entertained as to his ability to

my vote and opinion at a court-martial, had always the protection of secrecy, without anybody's calling me a 'skulking coward,' which I believe was the term applied in Parliament to such voters as may be desirous of the Ballot. Why there should be one rule of cowardice for the captain and another for the common man, I am unable to perceive. If asked why the Ballot was provided for me by the Mutiny Act, I must suppose it was because I had a public trust to execute. The opponents of the Ballot say that it is because the voter has a public trust that he ought not to have the Ballot."

fill the post of leader, which he has but recently assumed; and the stranger in the House cannot but feel these doubts confirmed when he looks at Lord John seated in his place on the Treasury Bench. For Lord John is small in stature and fragile in build; his face is not lit by any intellectual fire, and its small features are almost concealed by a broad-brimmed hat, pressed over the eyes. A black frock-coat, somewhat antique in cut, and a neckerchief snow-white in colour and of large dimensions, confirm the idea of mediocrity, if not mere shallowness, hidden beneath the outward trappings of respectability. When he rises to speak, however, all these ideas vanish; and in the power of the orator, one altogether forgets the physical insignificance of the man. Quite close, if not next to Lord John Russell, sits Lord Palmerston, who is Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Lord Palmerston is in every respect a contrast to his chief: tall, large-featured, broad in chest, and with a complexion that shows rude health. His air and his dress are the very opposite of the air and dress which respectability dons and enjoins; the air is jaunty, and the clothes are cut after the newest fashion. Smaller in stature, but equally well dressed, with a face similarly lit up by a mind that seizes the humorous, and a disposition inclined to the creed of Epicurus, Lord Morpeth takes care not to be far off from the Foreign Minister. Not improbably, the two exchange anecdotes, the one of foreign diplomatists, the other of Irish elections; for we know that at this time Lord Morpeth rules Ireland as Chief Secretary—he

afterwards ruled her as Lord Lieutenant. Mr. Spring Rice sits close by, staid as you would expect a Chancellor of the Exchequer, but not lively as you would expect a native of Limerick; and Mr. F. T. Baring dashes from the Treasury Bench to the lobby, and back again from the lobby to the Treasury Bench—for Mr. Baring is the senior Liberal Whip.

On the front Opposition bench, the most notable figure in *physique*, as well as in manner, is a tall man with a full chest; a face with features large, regularly carved; and eyes grave and intellectual. This man sits in complete isolation; speaks rarely to any one, and is still more rarely spoken to. It is Sir Robert Peel, two years ago Prime Minister, and now leader of the Opposition. Lord Stanley is not far away: somewhat harsh in feature, and rough in appearance; carelessly dressed; when silent, lounging indolently; when in conversation, rapid and impetuous.

Not far away from the Ministerial bench, but still closer to the Radical section, sits Mr. E. Lytton-Bulwer. Mr. Bulwer, at this time, gives no indication of opinions that would bring a Secretaryship of State for himself from one Tory Government, and the Viceroyalty of India for his son from another Tory Government. On the contrary, he is a pronounced Radical, and his victory at Lincoln has been won by mighty Radical exertions and some Radical sacrifices. Close to Mr. Bulwer is a young man—he might almost be called a boy—who has fair hair and features delicate almost to femininity. This is Lord Leveson,

who but a week or two ago proposed the reply to the Address from the Crown in a speech that is said to give promise of ability and of a high position in the future. He who was Lord Leveson then, is Earl Granville now.

Of all groups in the House, the one that strikes you as containing the youngest and best-dressed men is the Radical group. At their head sits Sir William Molesworth, who does not look more than eight-and-twenty; a dandy in dress, and somewhat Dundrearyish in delivery; fair in complexion, and with hair "approaching in colour to red;" eye-glassed, and altogether like a Radical leader who has a rent-roll of £12,000 or £14,000 a year. Mr. Leader, who sits next to Sir William, and is constantly consulting with him—for they are bosom friends—looks still younger, and, though plainer in dress, has also the appearance of the politician who is at once Radical and rich. Mr. Leader has recently given strong proof of both the wealth and the Radicalism, for twice in three years he has contested Westminster, one of the most expensive constituencies of that as well as of the present time. In this group also sits a man who, even more than Sir William Molesworth, is the paragon of fashion—gloved in lavender or straw-coloured kid, with boots of the brightest hue, and a hat of the make that Count d'Orsay approves. As to person, tall and well proportioned; and in deportment frank, manly, and freer from affectation than one might expect. This is the Member for Finsbury—"honest Tom Duncombe," as

that age calls him, whom, however, we, guided by Mr. Greville, may not wholly regard as so honest or so clever as his contemporaries believed. In this same group is also Mr. Joseph Hume, a contrast to his companions: staid in manner, plain in dress, and no longer young. Mr. Hume may look a little depressed, for he has been defeated by the Tories in his own constituency of Middlesex, and is now a Member of the House through the gracious pleasure of the electors of Kilkenny.

The great Irish agitator, of course, sits close to the Radicals, for he is for the time a supporter, and, indeed, according to the *Times*, one of the pillars of the Ministry. In this year he is still in the fulness of his health and power. He is ruddy in face, his form is still Herculean in strength, and with hat jauntily placed on the side of his head, he looks around with a broad smile that shows brightness of spirits and consciousness of power. Next to him is a man small in stature, and delicate in frame, apparently consumed by a restless energy; pallid; with an eye small, unquiet, and piercing, a prominent nose, and a small, thin-lipped mouth. This is O'Connell's chief lieutenant, Richard Lalor Shiel. In the same group are the two sons of the great Henry Grattan: James, heavy and stolid; and Henry, slight and excitable.

The House also contains Mr. Charles Villiers, who has already distinguished himself on the question of the Corn Laws, a question rapidly rising in national importance. The present Earl of Shaftesbury sits in the

Commons as Lord Ashley, and the chroniclers * from whom I derive the description of the House describe him as tall and handsome, with black hair, usually worn rather long. Mr. Bernal, father of Mr. Bernal Osborne, is Member for Rochester and Chairman of Committees ; a tall, robust man, with a splendid figure, which ill-natured people say he is overproud of displaying. The late Lord St. Leonards is at this time Sir Edward Sugden ; compactly made, rosy in complexion, and free from wrinkles at fifty-five. We, at first sight, cannot find Sir Francis Burdett, for we naturally look for him among the Radicals, or, if not there, somewhere at least on the Whig benches. But Sir Francis is to be found in an obscure and remote seat on the Tory benches ; for within the last year he has definitely announced his abandonment of the principles of his youth, and is now as ardent in the creed of the Conservatives as he was formerly in that of the Radicals. If changed in opinions, he is not, however, much changed in appearance. Though old, his form is still erect, or, to quote the grandiloquent description of Shiel, he still looks "a venerable relic of the temple dedicated to freedom, though ill-omened birds now build their nests and find shelter in that once noble edifice." In attire, too, Sir Francis sticks to the habits of his youth, and still deserves, as Lady Hester Stanhope insisted years ago, to be considered the best-dressed man in England.

* Mr. James Grant, "The Senate of 1838;" and Mr. G. H. Francis, "The Orators of the Age."

There are, too, the usual supply of one-idea'd Members. Mr. Brotherton has a motion to regulate the hours of the House; the Hon. Grantley Berkeley is anxious that ladies should be admitted to hear the debates; Mr. Ward wants the repeal of the rate-paying clause in the Reform Act; Mr. Grote annually proposes a motion in favour of the Ballot, which is of course ignominiously rejected; and Mr. Plumptre, tall, lank, gloomy in air and countenance, watches Newdegate-like the interests of Protestantism and the foul intrigues of the adherents of "the Scarlet Lady."

Finally, we see two other men who attract notice, and appear to be about equal in years. One is Charles Buller, lively almost to mischievousness; when he speaks, tearing through Tory fallacies with a merciless sense that foreshadows the style of Mr. Lowe, and a power of playful illustration that strongly resembles the style of Sydney Smith. At this time everybody expects that Mr. Buller has a great future before him; and who, looking at his bright face, his vivid manner, his gay air, can foretell for him an early death?

The other young man who catches our eye sits on the Tory benches. He has a singularly handsome face; a modesty of manner that at once prepossesses; and you observe that, when he rises, his words are listened to with an amount of attention almost out of proportion to his youthful years. He has—to quote the words of a writer of the time—"a fine head of

jet black hair," that "is always carefully parted from the crown downwards to his brow, which it tastefully shades." The features are regular, and, says the writer, "his complexion must be a very unworthy witness if he does not possess an abundant stock of health." This is Mr. W. E. Gladstone, the Member for Newark, who is at this time a Tory among Tories, is writing, or has just written, an able defence of the Irish Church, and two years ago acquired some distinction as Under-Secretary for the Colonies.

We miss from the House several persons of note. Sir James Graham is not there, for he has just been defeated in Cumberland. Mr. T. B. Macaulay is away in India, adding many thousands to his fortune, and subtracting many years from his life. But where is Mr. Roebuck, he whose Radical opinions and tongue of venom have, during the last few Sessions, lashed the timid Whigs, who form the Government, into paroxysms of rage and fear? Where is Roebuck, the chosen champion of the Canadians, who has held language that less ardent friends consider almost rebellious? Where is Roebuck, who has sounded the tocsin at a dozen Radical banquets throughout the year? Alas! the "rising hope" of the Radicals has been rejected by the faithless Bath; and, when now he listens to a debate, secretes himself in one of the strangers' galleries, his small body enveloped in a huge cloak, and his features scarcely visible. Mr. Roebuck at this time looks, we are told, "just like a boy out of his teens."

The present Lord Derby is in his eleventh year: Lord Salisbury, who is in his eighth, has just been left motherless. Lord Cairns is working hard as a student in Trinity College, Dublin; and Mr. Lowe is drudging as a tutor in Oxford. Mr. Bright is unknown; Mr. Cobden has just been defeated at Stockport.

A word or two as to the political situation. Though the Whigs were in office, they could scarcely be said to be in power. The Reform Bill of 1832, which was intended to give them a lease of Downing Street for generations, had not secured them from defeat for even two short years, for, by December, 1834, Sir Robert Peel had received an offer of the Premiership. The successors of Lord Grey were not likely to succeed when he so disastrously failed. Lord Melbourne was a clever tactician, and was not afflicted by that thinness of skin which unfitted Lord Grey for the coarse contests of politics; but he had not Lord Grey's high character. Lord John Russell was able, but public opinion of that time regarded him as infinitely inferior in statesmanship to the leader of the Tories. And what had become of the other great leaders who had helped to pass the Reform Bill? Durham was gone; Brougham, refused the Chancellorship, had become that most dangerous enemy—the candid friend; and Lord Stanley had openly gone over to the Tories.

There was division in the ranks as well as weakness in the leaders. The small knot of Radicals were

impatient for new changes, and were almost at open war with the Ministers, of whom some had absolutely refused to go farther, and some had declared the time not yet ripe. The Irish section, it was true, lent support to the Ministry, but that support was uncertain, and might at any moment demand a return which no English Minister could safely bestow.

And it was this alliance with the Irish section which partly accounted for the general unpopularity of the Ministers. In the first place, England was disgusted with the prominence which purely Irish questions had for some time obtained, and looked with distrust on any alliance between the Government and a man who, like O'Connell, was pronouncedly Catholic, and, in English eyes, not far from rebellious. The Tories, of course, had made good use of these popular prejudices. Highly coloured accounts of agrarian murders in Ireland were daily published, and the Protestant Church was for the hundredth time declared to be in danger.

While the Tories were looking forward with confidence to a dissolution, the King suddenly died, and a new Parliament had to be hurriedly called together. When the calculations were made out, it was found that the Ministers could count on 337, and the Opposition on 321 votes. The Whigs had gained a Pyrrhic victory.

During the recess, much attention had been attracted by a subscription which had been started by Mr. Andrew Spottiswoode, the Queen's printer. The subscription had two objects: to supply Protestant candidates with

money to fight for the Irish constituencies; and, secondly, when these candidates were defeated, to again supply funds for prosecuting petitions against the Catholic Members returned. A subscription of this kind appeared to the Liberals nothing less than a conspiracy against the political and religious liberties of Ireland. It was vehemently denounced for months in hundreds of Liberal speeches and Liberal articles; and, of course, the Tory politicians and writers were quite as vehement in its defence.

It was not, however, the general body of those who gave their adhesion to the "Spottiswoode Subscription" —as it came to be called—who most excited Liberal indignation. Some Members of Parliament were among the first and the most munificent subscribers; and it was represented that, as these gentlemen would afterwards have to decide on the election petitions, they were assuming the double *rôle* of accuser and judge. Among the Members thus denounced, Sir Francis Burdett was subjected to the chief part of the Liberal denunciation. As already mentioned, Sir Francis had at this time definitely abandoned the Liberal creed of his youth, and had been returned as a Tory Member for North Wilts. He had taken a peculiarly ostentatious form of announcing his approval of the Spottiswoode Subscription, and was, of course, more fiercely assailed because of his Radical antecedents.

On the 7th of December, 1837, Mr. Smith O'Brien brought the conduct of Sir Francis Burdett before the notice of Parliament, and it was in the discussion on

this motion that Mr. Disraeli made his first speech. The debate, as is usually the case with debates on personal questions, was extremely lively.

The passage of arms between O'Connell and Sir Francis Burdett was particularly severe. Addressing O'Connell, who had during the vacation hurled denunciations of characteristic vehemence against the deserter from the Liberal ranks, Sir Francis accused him of "driving, in conjunction with a set of priests, Irish voters to the poll, to vote for their god." He even accused the Irish agitator of encouraging assassination; and declared that many people were then living in Ireland under a system of terrorism "more powerful and terrible than that which existed under Robespierre in France."

Of course O'Connell's reply was equally unsparing. But I can quote only one passage, and that I select, because, while it gives some idea of the style of language used at that time, it also contains O'Connell's defence of his position as a paid agitator. "The honourable baronet opposite me," said O'Connell, "calls me the paid patriot of Ireland. I am so, and will be so with this new stimulus. I stand in this unexampled position: I sacrificed the largest professional emolument known in Ireland just at the period when Catholic Emancipation was carried—just at the time when I had every prospect of enjoying the leisure and dignity of the judicial bench, provided I abandoned politics. Is it for that sacrifice that I am now vilified and traduced by an old renegade?"

The moment O'Connell sat down, Mr. Disraeli rose.

Between Mr. Disraeli and O'Connell there had been, as the reader now knows, the deadliest hate for years. They had exchanged the most opprobrious terms; one of them had even sought to decide their feud at the peril of his life. But, up to this moment, the victory had remained with O'Connell. He was the head of a great party; he had a hundred platforms, and his place in the House of Commons, to speak from; he had the *prestige* of many political victories. On the other hand, Mr. Disraeli's life had been, up to a few months ago, an almost uninterrupted career of follies and defeats. He had written novels and a poem, at which the whole world laughed; he had sought election to Parliament four times, and had been four times defeated; he had asked the favour of many political parties, and had, accordingly, been distrusted by all.

But now, fortune had at last turned. Mr. Disraeli had two years before written to O'Connell that he would castigate him for the insults heaped upon him when once he was in Parliament. Well, he was now a Member of Parliament. O'Connell had just spoken; and he was on his feet to reply to his mortal enemy. Mr. Disraeli's hour had come.

He began modestly enough by the usual claim for indulgence; but had not uttered more than a few sentences when he showed his hand by beginning an attack on O'Connell. He accused the Irish agitator of having wandered from the subject, and of having introduced the Poor Law, among other irrelevant matter.

"Not a word was said about the Poor Law," here

interrupted Mr. Joseph Hume.* Thus corrected, Mr. Disraeli made an awkward attempt to retrieve himself, which produced loud laughter. The laughter was increased when, a few sentences further on, he treated the House to the strange phrase, "magnanimous mendicancy." He got on somewhat better when he entered into a defence of the Spottiswoode subscription; but after a while the interruptions were repeated, and he had to piteously promise that he would not trouble the House at any length.

"I do not," he said, amid rather cruel laughter, "affect to be insensible to the difficulty of my position. (Renewed laughter.) I am sure I shall receive the indulgence of hon. gentlemen—(continued laughter, and cries of 'Question'); but I can assure them that if they do not wish to hear me, I, without a murmur, will sit down. (Cheers and laughter.) I must confess I wish to bring the subject of the debate back to the proper point. (Renewed laughter.)"

After this, he was allowed again to proceed without interruption for some time. When, however, he wandered off into a dissertation on the Reform Bill, the cries of "Question" once more became loud.

"I wish," said Mr. Disraeli, "I really could induce the House to give me five minutes more. (Roars of laughter.) I stand here to-night, sir,—(here the noise in the House became so general that the hon. gentleman could not proceed for some time; when the

* I quote the account throughout from the *Morning Chronicle* of December 8, 1837.

confusion had somewhat subsided, he said)—I stand here to-night, sir, not formally, but in some degree virtually, the representative of a considerable number of Members of Parliament."

This amusingly cool assumption of speaking in the name of others on the part of one in—so to speak—the infancy of his membership, was considered wonderfully amusing, and naturally was received with "Bursts of laughter." Mr. Disraeli went on,—

"Now, why smile? (Continued laughter.) Why envy me? (Here the laughter became loud and general.) Why should I not have a tale to unfold to-night? (Roars of laughter.)"

In these sentences there appears some tendency on the part of Mr. Disraeli to conciliate his ridiculers by pretending to join in the laugh against himself. But even this humble form of appeal did not succeed, and his strange phraseology once more got him into trouble. Let me again quote the report :—

"Do you forget that band of a hundred and fifty-eight members—those ingenuous and inexperienced youths to whose unsophisticated minds the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in those tones of winning pathos—(excessive laughter, and loud cries of 'Question'). . . . . About that time, sir, when the bell of our cathedral announced the death of the monarch—(Oh, oh! and much laughter)—we all read then, sir (groans and cries of Oh!)—we all then read (laughter and great interruption). . . . I know nothing which to me is more delightful than to show courtesy to a new member, particularly if

he happens to appeal to me from the party opposed to myself. (Hear hear.) At that time we read that it was the death-knell of Toryism, that the doom of that party was sealed, that their funeral obsequies were about to be consummated. (Laughter.) We were told that, with the dissolution of that much vilified Parliament which the right hon. Baronet had called together, the hopes and prospects of the Tories would be thrown for ever to the winds—(laughter)—and that affairs were again brought exactly to what they were at the period when the hurried Mr. Hudson rushed into the chambers of the Vatican. (Immense laughter.)"

And so he went on amid continually repeated marks of impatience by the House until he had again to appeal for indulgence.

"If hon. members think it is fair to interrupt me, I will submit. (Great laughter.) I would not act so towards any one, that is all I can say. (Laughter, and cries of 'Go on.') But I beg simply to ask—(Oh, and loud laughter.) Nothing is so easy as to laugh. (Roars of laughter.) I really wish to place before the House what is our position. When we remember all this—when we remember that in spite of the support of the honourable and learned gentleman the Member for Dublin, and his well-disciplined phalanx of patriots, and, in spite of all this, we remember the amatory eclogue—(roars of laughter)—the old loves and the new loves that took place between the noble lord, the Tityrus of the Treasury Bench,

and the learned Daphne of Liskeard—(loud laughter, and cries of 'Question')—which appeared as a fresh instance of the *amoris redintegratio*—(excessive laughter)—when we remember at the same time that, with emancipated Ireland and enslaved England, on the one hand a triumphant nation, on the other a groaning people, and notwithstanding the noble lord, secure on the pedestal of power, may wield in one hand the keys of St. Peter, and—— (Here the hon. Member was interrupted with such loud and incessant bursts of laughter that it was impossible to know whether he really closed his sentence or not.) The hon. Member concluded in these words: Now, Mr. Speaker, we see the philosophical prejudices of man. (Laughter and cheers.) I respect cheers, even when they come from the lips of political opponents. (Renewed laughter.) I think, sir—— (Hear, hear, and repeated cries of 'Question, question.') I am not at all surprised, sir, at the reception which I have received. (Continued laughter.) I have begun several times many things—(laughter)—and I have often succeeded at last. (Fresh cries of 'Question.') Ay, sir, and though I sit down now, the time will come when you will hear me. The hon. Member delivered the last sentence in a very loud tone, and resumed his seat amidst cheers from the Opposition, and much laughter from the Ministerial benches."

It will be seen from this report that Lord Beaconsfield *did* use the words prophetic of future greatness which have been attributed to him. We have grown

so accustomed to discovering that great phrases have been the invention of the historian, and not the real utterance of real persons in great crises, that some doubt may have been felt as to whether Lord Beaconsfield had spoken the remarkable phrase with which he was said to have ended his maiden speech. But I have found the words in the reports published the next morning in all the daily London papers. And not only this; but, curiously enough, the words seem to have attracted a good deal of attention. The *Morning Chronicle* has, it will be remarked, spoken of them in its report as being uttered in a particularly loud voice. And Mr. James Grant, writing in 1838, says of the conclusion of Mr. Disraeli's speech: "At last, losing all temper, which until then he had preserved in a wonderful manner, he paused in the midst of a sentence, and looking the Liberals indignantly in the face, raised his hands, and opening his mouth as wide as its dimensions would permit, said in a remarkably loud and almost terrific tones," *—the words already quoted.

There can be no doubt that Mr. Disraeli's appearance had a good deal to do with the failure of his *debut* in the House. The general conviction of the Liberals that they were listening to a conceited and theatrical charlatan, who only sought notoriety, could not have been but strengthened by an exterior thus described: "He (Mr. Disraeli) was very showily attired, being dressed in a bottle-green frock-coat and a waist-

* "Sketches in London," new edition, p. 57.

coat of white, of the Dick Swiveller pattern, the front of which exhibited a network of glittering chains; large fancy-pattern pantaloons, and a black tie, above which no shirt collar was visible, completed the outward man. A countenance lividly pale, set out by a pair of intensely black eyes, and a broad but not very high forehead, overhung by clustered ringlets of coal-black hair, which, combed away from the right temples, fell in bunches of well-oiled small ringlets over his left cheek."

"Mr. D'Israeli's appearance and manner," writes Mr. James Grant, "were very singular. His dress also was peculiar; it had much of a theatrical aspect. His black hair was long and flowing, and he had a most ample crop of it. His gestures were abundant: he often appeared as if trying with what celerity he could move his body from one side to another, and throw his hands out and draw them in again. At other times he flourished one hand before his face, and then the other. His voice, too, is of a very unusual kind: it is powerful, and had every justice done to it in the way of exercise; but there is something peculiar in it which I am at a loss to characterise. His utterance is rapid, and he never seemed at a loss for words. On the whole, and notwithstanding the result of his first attempt, I am convinced he is a man who possesses many of the requisites of a good debater. That he is a man of great literary talent few will dispute." *

It may be doubted whether the speech deserved to

* "The British Senate in 1838," ii. 335-6.

be visited with such failure. The speech appears to me far above the Parliamentary average. Many of its points are clearly and sharply put; it has clever retorts and happy phrases. The phrases, it is true, are unusual and eccentric, and not in the best of taste; but they are not unlike several which, in speeches delivered by Lord Beaconsfield in more fortunate days, were cheered to the echo and praised to the skies. What sentence in the whole speech is worse constructed or more tasteless than that in which on a memorable occasion Lord Beaconsfield described Mr. Gladstone? Indeed, I think one would look through the speech in vain for any phrase so bad as "inebriated with the exuberance of his own verbosity." On the whole, the impression this maiden speech makes on me is that it is wonderfully like the general run of all Lord Beaconsfield's speeches down to his latest years. It has the characteristic virtues and the characteristic faults of all his oratory; it is neither better nor worse than his other addresses: it is just the same. The real secrets of its failure were probably the appearance and manner of the speaker; but more than even these, the hate and contempt produced in one, and distrust produced in the other party, by the absurdities and contradictions of his past career. It would, therefore, probably be more correct to say that Mr. Disraeli failed to obtain a hearing from the House, than that he made a bad speech.

Of the London papers, the *Herald* and *Standard*

pass the speech over in silence ; the *Morning Post* complains that it was delivered "amid discourteous interruptions from the Radicals."

In those days, the *Times* was a strongly Tory, and the *Globe* a strongly Liberal, paper. The one was always ready to praise, and the latter, as the reader has already seen, even readier to abuse, Mr. Disraeli during the earlier years of his career. Their verdicts correspond in difference to their difference in opinion. "Mr. O'Connell," wrote the *Times* of the debate, "made his usual tirade about 7,000,000 of sufferers, and the seven centuries of oppression, and complained that this subscription was but a continuance of tyranny got up by the Protestants to assail the Catholics ; but Mr. Disraeli, who followed him in an eloquent speech, well observed that the Protestants gave their subscriptions, not to assail, but to defend."

"The *début* of Mr. Benjamin Disraeli," wrote the *Globe*, "last night in the House of Commons was one of the most lamentable failures of late years, as is, indeed, admitted in all the reports. Even the *Times* could not altogether suppress it, and, therefore, in its report has softened down the laughter, shouts, etc., which accompanied the honourable and extinguished Member's first attempt in Parliamentary oratory. In its leader, where the *Times* has so often proved that it will venture to say anything, however inconsistent with fact, it described this abortion as an eloquent speech. Eloquent speech ! Bah ! "

Let me conclude my extracts by the comments of

the *Morning Chronicle*. "The 'unextinguishable hate' of Mr. Disraeli for Mr. O'Connell found vent last night in a maiden but not very modest speech, which even his nearest friends will tell him was a ridiculous failure. We call it ridiculous, because the laughter of the House was continually excited by its extravagance of thought, phrase, and gesture. The honourable Member may in time prune some of his luxuriances, and then he may stand a chance of being heard with about as much patience as the House usually shows to Mr. Borthwick. Last night he was even worse treated than that ordinarily ill-used gentleman, and sat down without being able to complete his sentence."

Two facts, finally. The speech was heard by Lord Stanley and Sir Robert Peel. Lord Stanley, who immediately followed Mr. Disraeli, passed over the speech of the new Member with contemptuous, and, under the circumstances, ungenerous silence. Sir Robert Peel received it with expressions of enthusiastic admiration, very unusual, if not almost unprecedented in him. With respect to this point, Mr. Grant says, "it is particularly deserving of mention that even Sir Robert Peel, who very rarely cheers any honourable gentleman, not even the most able and accomplished speaker of his own party, greeted Mr. D'Israeli's speech with a prodigality of applause which must have been very trying to the worthy baronet's lungs. Mr. D'Israeli spoke from the second row of benches immediately opposite the Speaker's chair. Sir Robert, as usual, sat on the first row of benches, a little to the left of

Mr. D'Israeli; and so exceedingly anxious was the right honourable baronet to encourage the *debutant* to proceed, that he repeatedly turned round his head, and, looking the youthful orator in the face, cheered him in the most stentorian tones." *

* "British Senate in 1838," ii. 334. The picture which Mr. Grant gives of Mr. Disraeli after his failure is worth quoting. "He seemed," writes Mr. Grant, "to feel deeply mortified at the result of his maiden effort. He sat the whole evening afterwards—namely, from ten till two o'clock in the morning—the very picture of a disappointed man. He scarcely exchanged a word with any honourable gentleman. He did not cheer when his party cheered Lord Stanley and Sir Robert Peel; neither did he laugh when they laughed. He folded his arms on his breast for a considerable part of the evening, and seemed to be wrapped up in his own unpleasant reflections."—*Sketches of London*, new edition, 158. Was it of this *mauvais quart d'heure* Mr. Disraeli was thinking when he spoke in one of his works of the "hell of failure"?

CHAPTER VIII.

"HUMBLE, BUT FERVENT."

THE reader who has followed this narrative so far will be able to fully appreciate the significance of the utter *fiasco* in which Lord Beaconsfield's maiden speech ended. It has been seen how Lord Beaconsfield had for years forced himself, in season and out of season, into public notice, and that he had thus always occupied a prominent, if not always a creditable place in the public eye. We know that he had contrived to pick more personal quarrels than almost any man of his time, and that, as a consequence, his political opinions and political conduct had been as frequently and hotly discussed as those of a leading Minister.

The reader has also had an opportunity of seeing the many examples Lord Beaconsfield had given the world of overweening conceit. He has learned how Lord Beaconsfield had proclaimed himself a great statesman, a great novelist, and a great poet. The feeling of the public can then be well understood when the papers of the day following December 7,

1837, were read. What! had the brazen-trumpeted boast of years ended in *that?*

Moreover, as has also been seen, Mr. Disraeli had himself specially invited attention to this especial event in his life. In the "Young Duke," Mr. Disraeli had written—"One thing is clear, that a man may speak very well in the House of Commons, and fail very completely in the House of Lords. There are two distinct styles requisite: I intend in the course of my career, if I have time, to give a specimen of both. In the Lower House, 'Don Juan' may perhaps be our model; in the Upper House, 'Paradise Lost.'"*

But besides this we have in "Vivian Grey" the toast—"Mr. Vivian Grey, and success to his maiden speech."† In another way, too, had Mr. Disraeli drawn the eyes of the world to his maiden speech. In the course of his quarrel with O'Connell, he had warned the agitator that they would meet at Philippi, and that then O'Connell would be properly punished.‡ Mr. Disraeli took care to remind his audience of his former boast by rising the moment after O'Connell had sat down. The meeting at Philippi had taken place; and this ridiculous and terrible failure had been the result.

These facts are recapitulated for the purpose of pointing out how inexhaustible was the fund of Mr. Disraeli's self-conceit. A man of even ordinary sensitiveness would have felt this catastrophe so seriously as to hide his head, if not for ever, at least for a con-

* New edition, p. 287. † See *ante*, 37. ‡ See *ante*, 110.

siderable period. Not so Mr. Disraeli: *seven days after* his first calamitous effort, he again addressed the House of Commons.

He was wise enough, however, to alter his plan of operations. In place of making a long and set speech, he spoke but a few sentences, which cannot have occupied more than a few minutes in delivery. The occasion was the introduction of Serjeant Talfourd's Bill to amend the law of copyright. Mr. Disraeli spoke in favour of the Bill.

He spoke on but three or four other occasions during this first session of his, and always with brevity.

In the following session, he adopted a somewhat bolder tone; his speeches, though not frequent, were tolerably long, and were on leading, not subsidiary subjects. He joined in the opposition of the Conservative party to the wretched grant of £20,000 in aid of education, which Lord John Russell proposed in 1839; but signalised himself by going out of the beaten track of the Conservative orators into a long eulogium of the doctrine of *laissez-faire* in education.

Some time after this, he delivered an address in which we find the first germs of the principles which afterwards became those of the "Young England" party.

In the course of 1839 the Chartists had organised their forces and formulated their demands. On the 14th of June in that year, the famous National Petition was presented to the House.

Mr. Disraeli, on this occasion, preached the doctrine

that the poor can only obtain their rights through the aristocratic classes ; * and declared that he was not ashamed to say, however much he disapproved of the Charter, he sympathised with the Chartists.

Some critics have discovered a certain amount of generosity in the attitude which Lord Beaconsfield assumed on this occasion. It appears to me, however, that his friendliness to the Chartists was of a very safe character. Of what avail was it to profess sympathy with these people when he joined in the rejection of every single one of their demands?

Mr. Disraeli "sympathised with the Chartists." Well, the National Petition presented by the Chartists demanded universal suffrage. When Mr. Hume proposed a motion in favour of household suffrage, on March 21, 1839, the gentleman who "sympathised with

* "Great duties could alone confer great station, and the new class which had been invested with political station had not been bound up with the *great mass of the people by the exercise of social duties.* Those who thus possessed power without discharging its conditions and duties were naturally anxious to put themselves to the least possible expense and trouble. Having gained that object, for which others were content to sacrifice trouble and expense, they were anxious to keep it without any appeal to their pocket, and without any cost of their time." And again: "He believed that in this country the exercise of political power must be associated with great public duties." "The English nation would concede any degree of political power to a class making simultaneous advances in the exercise of the great social duties." "The noble lord had answered the speech of the honourable Member for Birmingham, but he had not answered the Chartists." "They complained only of the government of the middle class. They made no attack on the aristocracy, none on the Corn Laws, but upon that newly enfranchised constituency; not on the old, but upon that peculiar constituency which was the basis of the noble lord's Government."—Hansard, July 12, 1839.

the Chartists" spoke and voted against the motion. The National Petition demanded the ballot. When, on June 18, in this same year of 1839, Mr. Grote proposed a motion in favour of the ballot, Mr. Disraeli forgot his sympathy with the Chartists, and forgot as well his own vehement support of the ballot at the Midsummer election in Wycombe in 1832, at the December election in the same place in the same year,—forgot his support of the ballot in his address to the Marylebone electors in 1833,—and was found in the list of those who went into the lobby against Mr. Grote. The National Petition demanded annual Parliaments; and Mr. Disraeli, notwithstanding his sympathy with the Chartists, notwithstanding his strong and frequent support of Parliaments of shorter duration,—implied disapproval.

But why did Mr. Disraeli express sympathy with the Chartists at all? The first explanation of his conduct appears to me that such an attitude was singular, and therefore presented the hope of notoriety. It probably likewise appeared to Mr. Disraeli that the Chartists, who were then a powerful party, might be used for his interests in some way or other. They belonged to what Conservatives call the mob, it is true; but the more insensate a political party is, the more foolish its aims and its leaders, the better Lord Beaconsfield likes it. Vivian Grey places his highest hopes of achieving success on the meanness and the folly of men; and the creator of Vivian Grey has justified these hopes. It is quite possible, then, that Lord Beaconsfield may have entertained the

idea of turning the folly of Chartism, as he afterwards turned the lunacy of "Jingoism," to his own account. But it requires little reflection to see that these professions of sympathy were more insincere in Mr. Disraeli than in almost any other man. I am not judging him, of course, by the standard of the *bourgeois*, who regards "the poor in a loomp" as bad; for, of course, he has too much intelligence, and is too free from bigotry and ties, to have such narrow notions. But what I mean is that his craving for title and wealth, lofty position and splendid mansions, necessarily exclude any true sympathy with the real democratic spirit, which hates distinctions of class, and sincerely feels for the humiliations of the poor.

Chartism, as everybody knows, ended in violence. A town in Wales was taken possession of by a mob;* in Birmingham there was a riot and bloodshed; and in London, a Chartist Convention for some time bearded the House of Commons. When Lord John Russell proposed the obvious expedient of increasing the police force, Mr. Disraeli joined in a minority of five, including tellers, by which the measure was opposed. By his opposition to this and a similar measure subsequently, Mr. Disraeli had the good luck to be attacked by two members of the Government—the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Mr. Fox Maule, then an Under-Secretary. The latter gentleman described Mr. Disraeli as an "advocate of riot and confusion."

* Irving: "Annals of Our Times," 40.

Here Lord Beaconsfield was given by the enemy his own choice of the field of battle; for what challenge could better suit Lord Beaconsfield's purposes and Lord Beaconsfield's peculiar gifts than a challenge to a combat in personal vituperation? He retorted on Mr. Fox Maule that Under-Secretaries were "coarse, vulgar, and ill-bred;" and then, bringing in his other antagonist, went on to say that "from a Chancellor of the Exchequer to an Under-Secretary of State was a descent from the sublime to the ridiculous, though the sublime was, on this occasion, rather ridiculous, and the ridiculous rather trashy." "How," said the orator, finally, "he became Chancellor of the Exchequer, and how the Government to which he belonged became a Government, it would be difficult to tell. Like flies in amber, 'one wondered how the devil they got there.'" *

As the House was about to adjourn, Mr. Disraeli seized another opportunity of making a speech, in which the favourite theme of the necessity for an alliance between the aristocracy and the Chartists was again dwelt upon.

The session of 1840 had hardly begun when Mr. Disraeli again demanded the attention of the House. During the recess a number of changes had taken place. Among other things, Mr. (afterwards Lord) Macaulay was made Secretary for War. On the motion for a new writ for Edinburgh, in consequence of the vacancy thus created, Mr. Disraeli, in a question of

* Hansard, 3 S. xxxix. 740.

some elaboration and length, demanded—or rather prayed, for the tone of the query is humble in the extreme—to know the meaning of these changes. But the elaboration, the length, and the humility of the interrogation were thrown away. "No reply was given," says the heartless Hansard.* "Motion agreed to." Mr. Fox Maule and the Chancellor of the Exchequer had taken to heart the lesson Mr. Disraeli had taught them in the previous session; and probably the House was beginning to resent the growing demands of Mr. Disraeli on its patience. But little they knew Mr. Disraeli, if they imagined that any degree of snubbing would put *him* down.

He took part in the debate on Sir C. Yarde Buller's motion of want of confidence, speaking of Sir Robert Peel as "the Right Hon. Baronet whom he was proud to follow;"† opposed Mr. Villers's motion in favour of the repeal of the Corn Laws;‡ and supported Mr. Thomas Duncombe in his appeal for better treatment of the Chartist prisoners.§

The events of the succeeding session of 1841 called upon Mr. Disraeli for still greater efforts, and he made them.

In the session of 1841 Mr. Disraeli played a very prominent part. What was the action of Mr. Disraeli? We can answer that question when we have answered another—What action was it the interest of Mr. Disraeli to take?

* *Ibid.* 3 S. li. 44.
† *Ibid.* 726.
‡ *Ibid.* lii. 380.
§ *Ibid.* lv. 637.

The Ministry of Lord Melbourne had by this time been reduced to a state of thorough debility. The bills brought it by Lord John Russell in the House of Commons were usually carried by miserable majorities —majorities usually not reaching a dozen. A hostile House of Lords was of course able to reject measures which the House of Commons had so feebly supported. So bill after bill was dropped, and England was ruled by a Government that did not govern. It was plain that the days of Lord Melbourne's Government were numbered. The successor to power was quite as plainly indicated: beyond all question, Sir Robert Peel was the rising sun. It behoved all those who hoped for place in the near future to be respectful to the Member for Tamworth.

Of course, Mr. Disraeli saw this; for, however fantastic, absurd, and unreal be his views of other things, he can claim to have an invariably clear perception of his own interests.

On May 7, 1841, began a prolonged and important debate on the sugar duties. On May 14, Mr. Disraeli spoke. We pass over such portions of the speech as argue, or profess to argue, the main question as at issue, and quote only the passages in which Mr. Disraeli alludes to Sir Robert Peel.

"He was surprised," said Mr. Disraeli, "that the noble leader of the Administration in this House had thought fit to impute—what? Faction, to the right hon. Member for Tamworth. Whatever might be the attributes of the right hon. Baronet, he never believed

that faction would be charged against him, and, of all persons in the world, it came with the worst grace from the noble Lord ; he was, of all persons, the last who should have made it." *

And then he proceeded to abuse Sir Robert Peel's rival as roundly as he had praised Sir Robert himself.

The debate on the Sugar Duties still further weakened the position of the Government, and strengthened that of Sir Robert Peel. So emboldened was the right hon. baronet by the turn things had taken, that a fortnight after he proposed a vote of want of confidence in the Ministry.

Watch the course of Lord Beaconsfield. He had spoken in favour of Sir Robert Peel in the debate on the Sugar Duties; but the praise was comparatively mild. Sir Robert Peel has now taken the final step, and is probably advancing to victory; the flattery must evidently be put on more thickly by a young politician "with expectations."

"Placed," said Mr. Disraeli of Sir Robert Peel, "in an age of rapid civilization and rapid transition, he had adapted the practical character of his measures to the condition of the times. When in power, he had never proposed a change which he did not carry ; and when in opposition, he never forgot that he was at the head of the Conservative party." †

"He had never employed," Mr. Disraeli went on, "his influence for factious purposes, and *had never been stimulated in his exertions by a disordered desire of*

* *Ibid.* lviii. 460. † *Ibid.* lviii. 856.

obtaining office; above all, he had never carried himself to the opposite benches by making propositions by which he was not ready to abide. Whether in or out of office the right hon. Baronet had done his best to make the settlement of the new constitution of England work for the benefit of the present time and of posterity." *

After a digression of vehement attack on the Government, Mr. Disraeli again turns to Sir Robert Peel: no Persian could be a more devout worshipper of the rising sun!

When the division came to be taken, the Government was defeated by a majority of one; and an appeal to the country was at once decided upon.

Mr. Disraeli was wise in supporting Sir Robert Peel so strongly!

The Ministers appeal to the country; the battle of the constituencies begins; and we shall hear how loudly Mr. Disraeli preaches the gospel of Conservatism, with Sir Robert Peel as its chief prophet.

Surely Sir Robert must do something for him!

Before I proceed further, let me make a brief allusion to one of the chief events in Mr. Disraeli's life. Mr. Wyndham Lewis, who was returned, as the reader will remember, along with Mr. Disraeli for Maidstone, died in the March of 1838. In the August of the following year—1839—Mr. Lewis's widow married Mr. Disraeli, who was then thirty-five years of age. Mrs. Lewis, who possessed a large fortune, was fifteen years older.

* *Ibid.*

Mr. Disraeli, for some reason or other, did not again seek the confidence of his Maidstone constituents. In company with Mr. Tomline, Q.C., he contested Shrewsbury. He and his fellow-candidate made their entrance into the town on Monday, June 14. From the speech which Mr. Disraeli made on this occasion, I find it necessary to make but one extract. I quote from the *Shrewsbury Chronicle*,* the Liberal organ.

"He"—Mr. Disraeli is meant—"*then proceeded to astound his Tory hearers with the immense sacrifice he had made for their sakes; namely, that he was born at High Wycombe—a borough the property of his father,—and that he had been defeated there by only* 15 *votes at the time of the Reform mania. Such a favourite was he there, that only a week ago* ALL PARTIES IN THE BOROUGH! *—Tory, Whig, and Radical!—had not only offered to place him at the head of the poll, but also to return* ANY *second member he might name!!!*"

Can Mr. Disraeli have uttered those words? I asked myself in astonishment when I first read them. As to his assertion about his place of birth, every authority I have consulted is agreed in saying that it was London —not High Wycombe.

The assertion about his relations with the people of Wycombe would be as astounding, if we had not been made familiar by Mr. Disraeli in the course of our narrative with statements about himself quite as strange. If Mr. Disraeli were so popular in High Wycombe—his native town!—why did he seek election at Shrews-

* June 18, 1841.

bury? Surely a man of Mr. Disraeli's good sense would have preferred certainty of success, even in the humble Wycombe, to the glorious uncertainty of the larger Shrewsbury. Surely Mr. Disraeli knew that, once elected, the member for a small borough was, *cæteris paribus*, quite as influential as the member for a large constituency. And if Tamworth was good enough for Sir Robert Peel, was not Wycombe quite equal to the dignity and the then position of Mr. Disraeli?

And, again, if Wycombe were the property of Mr. Disraeli's father—if Wycombe were the birthplace of Mr. Disraeli—if all parties were willing to place him at the head of the poll, and any person he chose to name beside him, when did this extraordinary affection begin? Mr. Disraeli, the reader knows, stood for High Wycombe *three* times. He stood for Wycombe in June, 1832; he stood for Wycombe in December, 1832; he stood for Wycombe in December, 1834; and Wycombe on every single one of those occasions rejected him. Surely Mr. Disraeli is misrepresented by the reporter of a hostile paper.

I turn, then, to another newspaper—to the *Shropshire Conservative*, which at this election is vehemently favourable to Conservatism, and to Mr. Disraeli as one of its exponents; and I find the very same statements reported in almost the very same words.*

* Here is a quotation from the report in the *Shropshire Conservative*, June 19, 1841: "He well knew that charges had been made against himself personally, but he was here to meet them, and would meet

This is not the only instance Lord Beaconsfield gave during this election of—what shall I call it? Unwilling to employ ugly language, I resort to the phrase "constitutional inaccuracy." Well, then, for another specimen of Lord Beaconsfield's "constitutional inaccuracy."

Among the signatures to the requisition inviting Mr. Disraeli to stand for Shrewsbury, was that of Dr. Kennedy, head master of the Shrewsbury Free Schools. On the Tuesday following Mr. Disraeli's entry into the town, the annual speech day of those schools took place, and of course Dr. Kennedy, staunch Conservative that he was, "trotted out" the Conservative candidates on the occasion. We all know the character of speech days. The guests, recalled for the moment to their days

them with pleasure, because he was speaking to a popular assembly. (Cheers.) They had been made in Parliament, and industriously repeated in provincial journals. He would quote the very words—that some years ago, on the hustings of his native town (Wycombe, in Buckinghamshire) it was his fortune to have been proposed by a Tory and seconded by a Radical. He pleaded guilty to the charge, and he would cheerfully add that if any Radical present wished to support him he would be most happy to receive their votes. (Cheers and laughter.) But it was said, secondly, that he had gone to the poll supported by Mr. O'Connell. (Laughter.) *Why, that borough was the property of his father—there he was born*—there he hoped to die—and there, where every one had known him since infancy, he trusted that he needed not the recommendation of any one. (Cheers.) In that borough, during the height of the Reform mania, opposing the son of the Prime Minister, he was defeated by only fifteen votes. (Applause.) *Nay, not a week ago, all parties in the borough met and solicited him to represent them. Whigs, Radicals, and Tories united in this request*, and offered not only to place him at the head of the poll—(Cries of 'So you shall be here')—*but offered to return any second man he might name.* (Cheers.)"

of boyhood and youth, talk of nothing but their school or college. The public learns that such a man, whom it has long known as a successful lawyer, wrote the best Greek verses at Eton ; that this other man, who is now a grave politician, rowed "stroke" at Oxford, and so on.

The speech day at Shrewsbury School on this 15th June, 1841, was like that in other schools at other times. Thus Dr. Kennedy, who presides, proposes the health of Mr. Tomline, Mr. Disraeli's colleague, as "a gentleman educated at Eton ;" and Mr. Tomline, naturally, in reply, declares that "as a pupil of Eton school he felt proud of its good name, and gloried in the honours obtained by its scholars."

Now, the reader can understand the embarrassing position in which Mr. Disraeli was placed on this occasion. One of his biographers* has remarked that he was never an inmate of the aristocratic schools or universities in which he always places his heroes. And this fact has been fully set out in the second chapter of this book. Here, then, was Mr. Disraeli, who never had been at one of the fashionable schools, called upon to speak among those fashionable scholars. What was he to do? Confess? No: it was not Mr. Disraeli's habit to ever acknowledge any fact that would tend to show that he was not quite as aristocratic as any of his neighbours. Mr. Disraeli preferred to be "constitutionally inaccurate."

"The chairman," says the report, "then proposed

* J. C. Jeaffreson, "Novels and Novelists."

the health of Mr. Benjamin D'Israeli, as a Winchelser scholar." *

Now, as everybody knows, there is a fashionable school at Winchester; and the chairman plainly implied that Mr. Disraeli had been a scholar of this fashionable school. If we talk of a man as an Eton scholar, we, of course, mean that he was a scholar of the great public school of the town, and not of a school under private management, which may happen to be in the same place. And the same thing holds good of Winchester. Therefore, when Dr. Kennedy —instructed, of course, by Mr. Disraeli—called that gentleman a Winchester scholar, he meant that he was educated at the great public school. But all the authorities we have consulted agree that Mr. Disraeli was *not* educated at the great public school in Winchester, but at a private school there!

Nor should I pass over the reply Mr. Disraeli made to the proposal of his health as a "Winchelser scholar;" for he managed to pay an extravagant compliment to poor Dr. Kennedy and Sir Robert Peel, and at the same time to represent himself as on terms of touching intimacy with the Conservative chief. In fact, to believe Mr. Disraeli during this Shrewsbury campaign, Sir Robert Peel and he stood to each other almost

* So Mr. Disraeli is described in the report of the *Shrewsbury News* (Saturday, June 19th, 1841), probably through a misprint. The report of the *Salopian Journal* (Wednesday, June 16th, 1841) appears more accurate. It writes: "The health of Mr. Disraeli, M.P., was next given in connexion with Winchester Schools, where he had been educated."

in the tender relation of political father and son. The loving Peel is constantly advising young Mr. Disraeli, chiding his innocent gambols, and patting his little head; and the affectionate Mr. Disraeli, in return, looks up to Peel with reverent eyes, humbly begs his counsel, mildly accepts his rebukes, and proudly tells him of his own little triumphs.

"Vivian Grey" at thirty-seven had, in fact, become a confiding boy.

"It was a singular circumstance, too," said Mr. Disraeli, "that during the last great debate in the House of Commons, on the education of the people, *the greatest statesman of his age, Sir Robert Peel*, had placed in his hand the letter of Dr. Kennedy on that important subject, and recommended him to study it carefully as a guide which way to vote.*

All the papers of the period are agreed in representing Shrewsbury as most corrupt; and this led to a violent and prolonged controversy as to the state of Mr. Disraeli's finances. One of the consequences of this was that he was challenged by Mr. William Yardley, who took a prominent part in this dispute; and both he and Mr. Yardley were bound over to keep the peace.†

In this election we find Lord Beaconsfield's late wife

* *Shrewsbury News* (June 19, 1841).—This Dr. Kennedy, whom Mr. Disraeli so compliments, had, according to the *Shrewsbury Chronicle*, about a year previously assisted in getting up a petition against the removal of Jewish disabilities.

† *Salopian Journal*, June 30, 1841.

give proof of that wifely devotion for which she will always be remembered with deep respect.

"His"—Mr. Disraeli's—"wife assists at his canvass," writes the *Globe*,* "with all the energy of despair."

And thus—with a certain touch of malice—another Liberal journal refers to Mr. Disraeli's share in the election: "At the conclusion of their harangues, Mrs. D'Israeli was introduced to the crowd by Mr. Burton, and *her* successful canvass was rewarded by reiterated cheers." †

Of the nomination I need only mention one incident. On this occasion, for the first time so far as I have seen, Lord Beaconsfield displayed his crest, and the now well-known motto, *Forti nihil difficile*. On this motto the rival journals make different comments. In the opinion of the Tory organ,‡ it "was taken as indicative of the character of the honourable candidate." "There were several flags on the Tory side," writes the Liberal journal,§ "some of them rather tastefully ornamented, and one bearing a surprising proof of the industry and research of Norry King-at-Arms—namely, a thing that purposed to be the crest of D'Israeli!!! and bearing beneath it the motto 'Forti nihil difficile,' which, being translated, means that the impudence of some men sticks at nothing."

The polling took place on June 28 and 29. The

* June 25, 1841.

† *Shrewsbury Chronicle*, July 2, 1841.

‡ *Salopian Journal*, June 30, 1841.

§ *Shrewsbury News*, July 3, 1841.

result of the poll was the return of Mr. Tomline and Mr. Disraeli.

Mr. Disraeli's election was celebrated, of course, by a dinner, and the report of his speech on the occasion is strange reading nowadays. The speech was one long and fulsome eulogium of Sir Robert Peel. Before the sight of Peel's dazzling greatness, Mr. Disraeli professes to stand aghast: there never, in fact, was such a wonder of a man. Amid "the tumult of faction and popular malice," when "public feeling was excited to a state of frenzy," Peel, preserving his colossal, calm, and gigantic sense, "laid the great foundation of the great Conservative party." Peel was "a great man;" his "talents" were "great;" his "foresight" "matchless." And Mr. Disraeli also favours us with another scene in the pretty little domestic drama, in which Peel plays the benignant father and Mr. Disraeli the duteous child. For it is pointed out, as a marvellous coincidence, that "Sir Robert Peel was returned to Parliament on the same day on which two of his *humble but fervent* supporters had been returned by the electors of Shrewsbury." But there is something still better than this; for Mr. Disraeli went on to state that the moment he was elected he hastened to personally communicate the fact to the great man.

"On the day of election, at twelve o'clock, he (Mr. Disraeli) had the satisfaction of writing to Sir Robert Peel to inform him the electors of Shrewsbury had done their duty. (Cheers.) If that intelligence had reached the hon. baronet on the hustings, he (Mr.

Disraeli) was certain it would have revived his hopes, and added to his confidence, to know the ancient town of Shrewsbury had responded to his call. (Loud cheers.)"*

It is tolerably certain that the public newspapers would have informed Sir Robert Peel of the result of the Shrewsbury election quite as soon as he cared to know. There was, therefore, no necessity for this letter, unless Mr. Disraeli and Sir Robert Peel had been on terms of such close and such friendly intimacy that their respective fortunes were a matter of keen interest to each other. What would Lord Beaconsfield think of one of his "humble but fervent supporters," who, at a general election, put him to the trouble of reading in a letter news which he might learn at his club, or from his newspaper? We can imagine the cynic smile with which the author of "Vivian Grey" would peruse such a plain intimation that there was somebody who was badly in want of something, and who, to gain that end, was willing to do a very considerable amount of flunkeyish worship of the powerful.

But what makes this act of Mr. Disraeli's the more remarkable is that not only were Sir Robert Peel and he not on terms of close friendship, but that, in all probability, the Conservative chief kept his "humble but fervent" supporter at a very long arm's length. Subsequent events will pretty clearly show that even at this period Sir Robert Peel disliked Mr. Disraeli; and

* *Shropshire Conservative*, July 3, 1841.

Mr. Disraeli was too keen a man, and too alive to his own interests, not to know who loved and who loved him not. It is very likely, then, that he was perfectly aware that he was not an object of liking to Sir Robert Peel. It is bad enough to force oneself, by means of abject flattery, on the attention of any man; but to do this on a man whom you know to be your enemy, shows a more than ordinary degree of thickness of skin and bluntness of feeling. But that is the way these coarse-grained and pushing men of the world get on. What do they care for your significant frowns and your pained shrinking away? You are weak, or good-natured; hate to be bored, or don't like to look unkind; and so the rude and calculating obtruder of self forces you to his wishes, and uses you to his ends.

Before passing from this part of my narrative, let me make a few brief observations on some of the literary productions of Lord Beaconsfield during the period the political history of which I have just given. In 1837 he published "Henrietta Temple" and "Venetia." "Henrietta Temple" is a love story, and has received a large amount of praise even from some critics who otherwise have little to say in favour of Lord Beaconsfield's literary skill. Indeed, one of those writers has gone so far as to declare it to be one of the most charming love tales in the language. This appears to me a most extraordinary verdict. The story is exaggerated, hysterical, and long-drawn-out. Many of the scenes remind one of the stilted rhetoric in which the lovers of some antiquated novelists used

to indulge; and others bear a resemblance to the more modern fiction of which the *Family Herald* is the best type. The book is inscribed to Count D'Orsay, who, under a fictitious name, figures as one of the characters.

"Venetia," Lord Beaconsfield dedicated to Lord Lyndhurst. In his preface he announces his intention to be "to shadow forth, though 'as in a glass darkly, two of the most renowned and refined spirits that have adorned these our latter days." The "renowned and refined" spirits are Shelley and Byron, the former of whom is described under the name of Marmion Herbert, and the latter under that of Lord Cadurcis. This was certainly an extremely ambitious attempt, and the courage of Mr. Disraeli went so far that, in order to make his picture of these two remarkable men more real, he wrote some poetry meant to pass as theirs. It certainly required all Lord Beaconsfield's boldness to attempt to produce verses equal to those of two of the most extraordinary poetic geniuses that have ever appeared in English or in any other literature. The effort, as might be expected, is creditable to Lord Beaconsfield's courage only. The verses bear the same resemblance to the poems of Shelley and Byron as the rhymes of a clever schoolboy who had diligently learnt the images most common in poetic writing, and was not devoid of the tricks of "jingling sounds." However, a man who was bold enough to class his bathetic and impotent epic with the productions of Homer, Virgil, Dante, and Milton, might be excused for

indulging in the minor ambition of writing poetry equal to that of the authors of "Queen Mab" and "Don Juan."

The reader will also see how like real life Mr. Disraeli's conception of these two men was, when he learns that Shelley is made a distinguished general in the American war of independence, and Byron an active political intriguer during the period subsequent to the Coalition Ministry of Lord North! "Venetia" is indeed a very mediocre performance; and in reading some of its pages of dreary inanity—its long-drawn-out descriptions of the most commonplace occurrences, its unspeakably vapid conversations,—one does not know whether to swear or smile, when one compares the pitiful result with the impudently bold project. Occasionally Lord Beaconsfield is successful in imitating something of the affected cynicism and gay flippancy with which Lord Byron used to talk and write; but the author of "Don Juan" would have smiled in derision or raved in fury had he been able to read the commonplace and poor stuff which his delineator puts into his mouth. Marmion Herbert is still more unlike the character it attempts to portray; and if it had any resemblance to Shelley, we should take him to have been a poor creature who was given to very prolix harangues and to very washy sentiment.

Happily for both Byron and Shelley, we know too much of their natures and lives to take Lord Beaconsfield's wretched caricatures as in the least degree resembling them. But if posterity were to think of

them as being such as are imaged forth in "Venetia," they might, even in their homes beyond the skies, wring their hands over the joy of the Philistines whom Lord Beaconsfield had so triumphantly avenged, and the wild delight of Little Bethel, whose worst judgments on Shelley and Byron Lord Beaconsfield's portraits would justify.

Undeterred by the conspicuous failure of "Venetia," Lord Beaconsfield two years after announced another project equally ambitious. In that year he published "Alarcos," which, in the dedication to Lord Francis Egerton, he calmly described as "an attempt to contribute to the revival of English tragedy." The work that was to perform this great exploit was scarcely heard of after its production, and would by this time have been completely forgotten, were it not for the political eminence to which its author has attained. But even the adventitious accessory of the writer's rank could not give it even the semblance of life. When Mr. Disraeli was Prime Minister for the first time, an enterprising manageress thought it might draw. It was not, however, in any of the theatres identified either with the classic drama or refined comedy, or with anything whatever of even a decent reputation, that Mr. Disraeli's work was produced. This attempt to revive English tragedy—this dramatic masterpiece of the chief ruler of this vast empire—made its appearance on the boards of a house devoted to tame elephants and chained lions, waltzing horses, performing monkeys, and the equestrian drama; but even in this humble

asylum of the houseless playwright, "Alarcos" was laughed off the stage after a few nights.

It is not uninstructive to pause for a moment to contrast the difference in the verdict pronounced upon Lord Beaconsfield's political and that on his literary and dramatic achievements. Pretentious inanity can make muddle-headed agriculturist or dining alderman admire and cheer, but it cannot obtain a decent run for the worthless drama of even a Prime Minister. The arbiters of literature, too, are happily of somewhat brighter material than the fatuous aristocrat, or the dull farmer, or the rabid Jingo that lift political impostors to power. In the world of literature, as in the world of politics, Lord Beaconsfield has sought to succeed by continually shouting at the top of his voice that of all literary men he was the greatest. But literary, unlike political arbiters have refused to take him at his own exaggerated estimate of his powers; and by them, the writer who ranked his epic beside that of Homer, Virgil, Dante, and Milton, who saw in his "Alarcos" a revival of the English drama, and who places his novels among the highest efforts of the human mind, is consigned to the region of poetasters, wrecked playwrights, and fifth-rate novelists.*

* It was not an English theatrical authority that ventured to put "Alarcos" on the stage; this bold exploit was reserved to what the *Pall Mall Gazette* (July 29, 1868,) calls a "venturesome American actress, one Miss Agnes Cameron." For an excellent critique of the tragedy itself, see the number of the *Pall Mall Gazette* just quoted; the issue of August 3, following, gives a most amusing description of how the play was "damned."

CHAPTER IX.

YOUNG ENGLAND.

When Parliament reassembled after the general election, there could be no doubt that the Government of Lord Melbourne was in a minority. The Conservative leader at once took decisive action, and, a few nights after the opening of the session, proposed a want of confidence motion. In the ensuing debate, Mr. Disraeli, of course, was one of the speakers.

During the election, Protection and Free Trade were one of the many issues contested, and the Whig Cabinet had not obscurely hinted that they were ready to make some advances in the direction of Free Trade. The body of the Conservative party, of course, still adhered to Protection; but their discreet leader had taken care to leave himself unpledged on the subject.

Mr. Disraeli, naturally, took the cue from his leader. His speech, therefore, on Peel's motion, was directed to show two things: (1) that Free Trade was not a monopoly of the Whigs; and (2) that a Ministry under Sir Robert Peel would be far more likely to carry

efficient Free Trade measures then the Ministry of Lord Melbourne. Such a line of argument, however inconsistent with Mr. Disraeli's expression of opinions on the same question a few years later, was yet in perfect consistency with his general plan of private and public life. The chief article of his own creed of conduct was that he should flatter those who could be useful to him, and Peel was one of those. His chief article of belief on the conduct of political parties was that the Tories should filch all the cries and measures of the Liberals. Free Trade had the appearance, in 1841, of becoming a popular cry, which might be taken up very advantageously by a political party. And Mr. Disraeli may have thought that the Free Traders might be used for Tory purposes, just as he had formerly thought that the Radicals and the Chartists could be played off against the Whigs. Mr. Disraeli, of course, had taken very good care to watch Peel's conduct during the elections; and a keen observer like him would not fail to observe that Peel's reticence on the subject pointed to the probability of his proposing Free Trade measures. The influence of those ideas may be easily traced in Mr. Disraeli's speech.

He began by completely denying that the policy of Free Trade would be retarded by the accession of a Tory Ministry. The Tories, not the Whigs, he contended, were the true Free Traders. "Why," he exclaimed, "*the progress of commercial reform was only arrested by the Reform Act.*"* That is to say, the

* Hansard, 3 S. lix. 173.

movement in favour of Free Trade would have been advanced by the virtuous Tories, had not the wicked Whigs intervened with their Reform Bill.

Then he went on to make another and perhaps still more important declaration. It will afterwards be found that one of the main assertions in Mr. Disraeli's philippics against Peel was that the Conservative chief had been elected as the champion of Protection. Mr. Disraeli also was most distinct in declaring over and over again that he himself had been returned to Parliament as an advocate of Protection. Such was his representation of the 1841 election in 1846: mark what his representation of it was in 1841.

"No man could pretend," said Mr. Disraeli, "that the late dissolution of Parliament, or the want of confidence which the country had expressed in the Government, *was in consequence of any sympathy in respect of the import duties;* but it was because the Government was weak—inefficient—*incapable of carrying those measures which they themselves believed to be necessary for the country.*" *

Can anything be plainer than the meaning of this passage? What can it mean but this—that the verdict of the constituencies had gone against the Whigs, and in favour of the Conservatives, *not* because the Whigs were in favour of Free Trade, but because they could not carry such efficient Free Trade measures as the Conservatives? †

* *Ibid.* 174.

† It is not necessary to overload my text with quotations in proof

There is another passage in this speech which it may be worth while to notice. In the "Vindication," one of Mr. Disraeli's favourite ideas was that the power of the Crown had been unduly diminished. This is an opinion, which—as will soon be seen—he took the trouble of preaching in several books, and which was one of the main principles of a political school he founded. And this is an opinion which, as Lord Beaconsfield and Prime Minister, he carried into most daring and far-reaching practice when he annexed Cyprus and assumed the protectorate of Asia Minor. It will not be forgotten that he justified the execution of these extraordinary measures without the consent of Parliament by pointing, among other things, to the confidence of the Sovereign in him and his administration. Well, during the election of 1841, as during the election of 1837, and in the debates in Parliament afterwards, the notorious preference of the Queen for the Cabinet of Lord Melbourne was brought forward as an argument in favour of Whig candidates. Mark how Lord Beaconsfield commented on the carrying out of his own principles by other persons. He declared that in former times, "when, if the name of the

of this interpretation of Mr. Disraeli's position in 1841 ; but I will append one more. It follows the one just given. "This, then," Mr. Disraeli went on, "brought him to the consideration of the real question before the House : the question was, *not whether the proposed measures were necessary, but whether a discussion of those measures ought to be invited or entered upon under the auspices of the present possessors of official power.*"—Hansard, lix. 174. Among the measures of the Ministry was a reduction of the duty on Corn to eight shillings.

Sovereign had been mentioned as lately it had frequently been used and resorted to in the House *in order to control and influence Parliament, such an attempt would have been held up to public scorn and indignation.*" *

Then he went on to denounce with violence the idea of a Minister defying the House of Commons "by declaring the Government was supported by the Crown." Such language amounted to "profaning the name of the Sovereign, as if the Majesty of England was *a second candidate upon some paltry poll.*†

The vote of want of confidence in the Government was carried by the enormous majority of 90, and Sir Robert Peel was called to power. We have seen the pains Mr. Disraeli had taken to please the Conservative leader; how slavishly he had flattered him in the "Runnymede" letters; how loudly he had sung his praises on the hustings; how incessant he was in defending him from every assault in the House of Commons. We have seen how he had even condescended to write to Sir Robert Peel of his success at Shrewsbury. Vain labour! Sir Robert Peel would have none of him. When the list of the Ministry was made out, Mr. Disraeli was not nominated even to an Under-Secretaryship.

However poignant may have been Mr. Disrael's disappointment, he was able for the present to completely conceal his feelings. He continued to work with undiminished industry, and he continued to laud

* Hansard, lix. 175. † *Ibid.* 176.

Sir Robert Peel with unabated zeal. On March 8, 1842, he delivered a long and clever speech, filled with spicy personalities, and making an impracticable proposal to unite the diplomatic and consular services.* Some of his attacks on individuals were unjust and ungenerous, and drew down upon him a biting rebuke from Lord Palmerston. Lord Palmerston added sting to his remarks by twitting Mr. Disraeli with his disappointed hopes of office.† Mr. Disraeli, of course, had no scruples then, or at any other period of his life, in assailing individuals, so long as he thus made his speech more palatable; and he replied to the sarcasm of Lord Palmerston with sarcasm quite as effective.‡

It was much more disappointing to him to find his

* Hansard, lxi. 219.

† "The hon. gentleman," said Lord Palmerston, "had indeed affirmed the general principle that political adherents ought to be rewarded by appointments, and he regretted to observe an exception to that rule in the person of the hon. member himself. After the proof, however, of talent and ability which the hon. gentleman had afforded, although, perhaps, not of great industry in getting up the details of his case, he trusted that before the end of the session the Government would overlook the slight want of industry for the sake of the talent, and that the House would see the maxim of the hon. member practically applied to his own case."—Hansard, lxi. 264.

‡ Thus Mr. Disraeli replied to this taunt: "Mr. Disraeli, in reply, said that he must offer his acknowledgments to the noble viscount for his courteous aspirations for his political promotion. Such aspirations from such a quarter must be looked upon as suspicious. The noble viscount was a consummate master of the subject; and if the noble viscount would only impart to him the secret by which he had himself contrived to retain office during seven successive administrations, the present debate would certainly not be without a result."—Hansard, lxi. 280.

proposal treated with as scant courtesy by Peel as by Palmerston. But he smothered his feelings; and on the next great opportunity came forward as one of the most earnest supporters of the Prime Minister.

It was on the 9th February, 1842, that Sir Robert Peel unfolded his plan for dealing with the Corn Laws. The speech which he delivered on this occasion, and on other occasions during this session, are somewhat astonishing. In those speeches Free Trade doctrines are distinctly enunciated, and the policy of 1846—which seemed to fall upon the political world like a summer cloud—is clearly foreshadowed. Thus, in the course of this speech of February, he bursts forth frequently into sentences which are as distinct an enunciation of Free Trade doctrines as we could find in the addresses of Mr. Cobden. "*It is*," he exclaims, "*utterly beyond your power, and a mere delusion, to say that, by any duty, fixed or otherwise, you can guarantee a certain price to the producer. It is beyond the reach of the Legislature.*"* And in another place he cries out, "*I believe that on the general principle of Free Trade there is now no great difference of opinion, and that all agree in the general rule that we should purchase in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest.*"

It is when, however, we come to examine what Peel's proposals were, we perceive still more clearly their thoroughly Free Trade character. Indeed, one cannot help wondering that the Prime Minister should have been able to pass at such a date measures so sweeping.

* Annual Register, lxxxiv. 24.

The duty was removed of more than a hundred and fifty articles of food,* among them bacon and ham. But this was not the part which showed most the boldness of Peel. He dared also to interfere with the three commodities in which the Protectionists were most deeply interested. The duty on live cattle, from being prohibitive, was reduced to £1 per head; fresh beef, which also was practically excluded from the home market by the high tax, was admitted at 8*s.* per hundredweight; and the duty on corn—on corn, the very heart and essence of the Protectionist interest—was reduced by considerably more than one-half! †

The effect of those proposals on the supporters of Sir Robert Peel also plainly indicates that they were essentially regarded as a partial adoption of Free Trade, and a partial abandonment of Protection. They produced a split in the Cabinet, the Duke of Buckingham retiring from his office; and they were "not effected," to use Peel's own words, "without great murmuring and some open opposition to the Government on the part of many

* Prentice, "History of the Anti-Corn Law League," i. 334.

† Sir Robert Peel thus himself described the changes made by his sliding scale: "When corn is at 59*s.* and under 60*s.*, the duty at present is 27*s.* 8*d.* When corn is between those prices, the duty I propose is 13*s.* When the price of corn is at 50*s.*, the existing duty is 36*s.* 8*d.*, increasing as the price falls; instead of which, I propose, when corn is at 50*s.*, that the duty shall only be 20*s.*, *and that that duty shall in no case be exceeded.* (Hear, hear.) At 56*s.* the existing duty is 30*s.* 8*d.*; the duty I propose at that price is 16*s.* At 60*s.* the existing duty is 26*s.* 8*d.*; the duty I propose at that price is 12*s.* At 63*s.* the existing duty is 23*s.* 8*d.*; the duty I propose is 9*s.* At 64*s.* the existing duty is 22*s.* 8*d.*; the duty I propose is 8*s.* At 70*s.* the existing duty is 10*s.* 8*d.*; the duty I propose is 5*s.*"—*Annual Register*, lxxxiv. 25.

of their supporters."* A measure of the extent to which this dissatisfaction went is afforded by the fact that the measures were openly denounced by the Duke of Richmond, one of the pillars of Conservatism, in the House of Lords,† and by several staunch Tories,—amongst the rest by Mr. Christopher, of whom we shall hear more by-and-by,‡—in the House of Commons; and that in one violently Protectionist district Sir Robert Peel was burned in effigy.§

Another proof of the real character of Peel's measures is the reception which it met with in the press. It was highly praised in the Liberal, and as vehemently abused in some of the Protectionist organs.‖

So far, I have quoted from purely contemporaneous evidence as to the nature of Sir Robert Peel's proposal in 1842; but that is not the only testimony on the point. One of the main pleas in the apology which

* "Memoirs of Sir Robert Peel," by Lord Stanhope and the Right Hon. E. Cardwell, M.P. Parts ii. and iii., 100-101.

† Hansard, 3 S. lxiii. 680 and 598.

‡ *Ibid.* lxxxiv. 144.

§ "Longtown, within some stone's-throw of the country seat of Sir James Graham, has shown its detestation of the new Corn Law by burning Sir Robert Peel in effigy."—Quoted in the *Examiner* (March 12, 1842) from the *Tyne Mercury*.

‖ "It moves," writes the *Examiner* (March 12, 1842); "the monopoly is on the slide; the pending Corn Bill, as Lord Howick says, is the precursor of more important changes; what it will do may be inconsiderable, but what it may undo is of vast moment. The scale is shrinking, and if Sir Robert Peel be suffered in power so long, next session, or the session after, he may propose another modification, 'small by degrees, and beautifully less.'" Among the Protectionist organs which denounced the proposals of Peel was the *Shropshire Conservative*, one of the Tory papers of Shrewsbury. Thus the hostility to Peel's measures by the ultra-Protectionist party was

Sir Robert Peel and his friends put forward for his action in 1846, is that it was simply the development of principles which he had professed throughout the entire course of his life. In the Memoir which Sir Lawrence Peel has published of his great kinsman, it is distinctly stated that Sir Robert Peel was always a Free Trader ;* and this is, to a very considerable extent, the inference which Sir Robert Peel wishes us to draw from his own Memoirs.† Apart altogether, however, from these Memoirs, I have shown, from Parliamentary reports published in 1842 itself,—at a time when any future changes could not have been contemplated,—that Sir Robert Peel did, as a matter of fact, make in that year a considerable step in advance towards Free Trade and from Protection, and that his measures were so regarded by himself, his friends, and his foes.

brought in the most distinct manner to Mr. Disraeli's knowledge. It will be seen further on that he, however, was so well satisfied with the partial abandonment by Peel of Protection that he vehemently defended him from the Conservative journalist in his constituency. See note to 257, further on.

* "A Sketch of the Life and Character of Sir Robert Peel." By Sir Lawrence Peel. 283.

† The Memoirs were written after both 1846 and 1842, and therefore are open to the suspicion of containing afterthoughts meant to explain an ambiguous past. In the Memoirs, however, Sir Robert Peel quotes memoranda which he submitted to the Cabinet in 1842, and which plainly show that the measures in that year were of a Free Trade character. Thus in one of the memoranda placed before the Cabinet occurs this noteworthy sentence: "We must assume, I think, that the import of foreign corn is necessary for the subsistence of the people, excepting in years of extraordinary abundance, or after a succession of favourable harvests."—("Memoirs," Part iii., Appendix, 331.)

Now, everybody is aware that Mr. Disraeli owes his advancement in a very considerable degree to his denunciations of Sir Robert Peel for that Minister's abandonment of Protectionist principles in 1846. As Mr. Disraeli was so furious in his zeal for Protection in 1846, we should naturally assume that he would be found among the opponents of Sir Robert Peel's partial desertion of Protection in 1842. And this we should be the more inclined to expect from the fact that the very men with whom Mr. Disraeli acted in 1846 were prominent in their opposition to the policy of 1842. It has been seen that the Duke of Richmond was one of the most vehement opponents of Sir Robert Peel in 1842. It will be seen afterwards that the Duke of Richmond was one of the most vehement of Sir Robert Peel's opponents in 1846. And Mr. Disraeli could have done little in 1846 without this same Duke of Richmond.

What will the reader say when he finds that these measures of 1842, which began the abandonment of Protection and the adoption of Free Trade, found Mr. Disraeli among their most enthusiastic supporters?

In his speech on the Premier's proposals, Mr. Disraeli began by repudiating the idea that the present action of Peel was a violation of his former opinions. He declared, "*with reference to the accusation made on the other side of the House, that the right hon. Baronet at the head of the Government had repudiated principles when in opposition which he had adopted when in office, that*

that charge had been made without due examination of the facts of the case." *

And then he went on to give his version of "the facts of the case." Whenever Lord Beaconsfield undertakes to state "the facts of the case," we may always expect something which is very amusing and very startling. We are not disappointed in this instance, for the theme of his speech is that the Tories were the originators and consistent advocates of Free Trade. Mr. Pitt was the father of Free Trade principles. It was he "who first promulgated them in 1787." † "The principles of Free Trade," went on Mr. Disraeli, pursuing this theme, "were developed—and not by Whigs—fifty years ago; and how was it that the Whig party now came forward and contended that they were the originators of these opinions?" ‡

And then, turning to the measures then before the House, here is what Mr. Disraeli declared: "*The conduct pursued by the right hon. Baronet was in exact harmony—in perfect consistency—with the principles in reference to Free Trade laid down by Mr. Pitt;* and his reason for saying thus much, was to refute the accusations which had been brought against the present Government, that, in order to get into, and, being in, to keep office, they had changed their opinions on these subjects." §

During the greater portion of the session of 1843, Mr. Disraeli continued to be a zealous supporter of Sir

* Hansard, 3 S. lxiii. 390.
† *Ibid.* 390.
‡ *Ibid.* 391.
§ *Ibid.* 392.

Robert Peel; and on nothing in the policy of the Conservative Prime Minister was he more lavish in his praise than on his commercial measures. He maintained, as in 1841 and 1842, the double thesis, that Free Trade was a Tory principle; and that, in passing Free Trade measures, Sir Robert Peel was following in the footsteps of his Tory predecessors.

Sir Robert Peel, however, continued to take no notice of this constant and persistent support; and at last Mr. Disraeli began to see that there was no hope for him in that quarter. He accordingly changed from friendship to hostility, from lavish praise to lavish abuse; but how that change came about, and went on, I must defer telling for a time. This will be the proper moment for referring to another movement, half literary, half political, in which Mr. Disraeli was engaged during the years, the Parliamentary history of which I have just sketched.

Among the members returned to the Parliament of 1841, were Lord John Manners, and Mr. George Sydney Smythe. With these and a few others, Mr. Disraeli formed what was called the "Young England" party.

Lord John Manners gave the world, in 1841, an opportunity of learning some of the tenets of the new school. In that year he published "England's Trust, and other Poems." The views expressed in these poems are, in religious matters, what we should now call Ritualistic; in questions between Church and State, what we term Ultramontane; and in politics,

the writer believes in the divine right of kings. Lord John, for instance, talks with deep regret of the days

> "When **mother-Church her richest stores** displayed,
> And sister-State on her behalf arrayed
> The tempered majesty of sacred law,
> And loved to reason, *but at times could awe;*
> When kings were taught to feel the dreadful weight
> *Of power derived from one than kings more great,*
> *And learned with reverence to wield the rod*
> *They deemed entrusted to their hand by God.*"*

Lord John, that is to say, is deeply moved that the time is past when the Church controlled the State, and could use the arm of the State in enforcement of its beliefs.

In other passages those ideas are again expressed. We are brought back with admiration to the times when,

> "haughtiest kings have stooped to kiss the rod
> Wielded by some poor minister of God." †

The following passage sufficiently indicates that leaning towards Roman Catholic doctrine, as well as Ultramontane theories, which was a characteristic of the Tractarian school. Speaking of Roman Catholic countries, Lord John Manners writes:

> "What tho' excess of faith commands them see,
> Where we may not, a present Deity?
> *Still are our hopes, our fears, our creeds the same,*
> Still do we triumph in our world-wide name;
> *And each true Christian fondly hopes to see*
> *The Holy Church once more at unity.*" ‡

* "England's Trust," 3-4. † *Ibid.* 16. ‡ *Ibid.* 22.

And, again, the idea of a universal and omnipotent Church is put forward thus :

> " Yes, through the Church must come the healing power,
> To bind our wounds in this tumultuous hour ;
> From her old courts and altar-steps must flow
> The streams of grace that shall assuage our woe." *

And, finally, on this question of the relation of Church and State, our poet writes :

> " The State, alas ! enervate and effete,
> Feels now no more that all-productive heat
> Which in her noontide prime *she erst received,*
> *Fresh from the Church,* believing and believed." †

In the first passage quoted, the author of " England's Trust," it has been seen, openly avows the creed of the divine right of kings. He spoke, it will be remembered, of kingly power as " derived from one than kings more great," and as " entrusted to their "—the kings'—" hand by God."

This idea of divine right recurs several times in the course of the volume. We are told of the " Lord's anointed in a sceptred king." Charles I. receives a poem all to himself :

> " Thou monarch martyr ! "—

writes Lord John Manners—

> " fain would I,
> In meet expression, own
> Thy boundless sovereignty,
> Thou captive on a throne,

* *Ibid.* 26. † *Ibid.* 27.

O'er my soul's pulses ; but in vain
The attempt, too grand, I make :
My feeble-hearted strain
Trembles to undertake
A theme so sacred," etc., etc.*

Lord John also admires the churchmen and politicians who stood by "the Martyr." Laud is praised; Lord Stafford is the subject of a poem:

" And he,"—

writes the poet—

" who 'bove each earthly thing,
Doth seek, with purpose high,
To do the bidding of the king,
Need never fear to die." †

This admiration of the past of course leads Lord John to have but a poor opinion of many modern things. For instance, the poet tells us that

" In many a hamlet, *yet unversed by trade*,
Bloom Faith and Love all lightly in the shade." ‡

And then there is the noble outburst which has made Lord John's poem immortal:

" No ! by the names inscribed in History's page—
Names that are England's noblest heritage,
Names that shall live for yet unnumbered years,
Shrined in our hearts with Crecy and Poictiers—
Let wealth and commerce, laws and learning die,
But leave us still our old Nobility !" §

Finally, Lord John, with commendable boldness, expresses the fullest approval of the indiscriminate

* "King Charles the Martyr," 65.
† "Thorow," 99.
‡ "England's Trust," 37.
§ *Ibid.* 24.

alms-giving fashionable in the good old times. The "purer faith of purer days" has begun to peep "through the mould that hides the good old ways;" and so we have begun to recall, with deep approval, among other things,

> "The daily beadsman, waiting for his bread,
> *Where good and bad were all, unquestioned, fed,*
> *For then it was not to our rulers known*
> *That God was mindful of the first alone;*
> The monks still practised their dear Lord's command,
> *And rained their charity throughout the land.*" *

George Sydney Smythe was a very different being from the writer of all this poor trash.

He was the son of the sixth Lord Strangford, and was born in 1818, at Stockholm, where his father resided as English Minister. At Eton he attracted some attention by his English verses; and at Cambridge,

* *Ibid.* 15. These passages I have quoted principally with a view of showing what were the opinions of Lord John Manners at this stage in his career. The extracts will, perhaps, also help the reader to form some idea of the literary merit of the poems. By way of aiding the judgment on this point, I think it well to add the three following extracts. In page 4 of "England's Trust," are these two lines:

> "My faith in my dear Mother-Church I fix,
> And scorn Religion's modern politics;"

and in page 13,

> "A plaintive melancholy note is mine,
> Such as was wont to float around the shrine,
> In days when faith, thro' ignorance, could hear
> The voice divine, and own a Godhead near."

In a poem entitled "A Night Storm" (page 57) occurs this passage:

> "I thought of sinners' awful doom,
> My flesh began to creep,
> I wished myself again at home,
> I wished I were asleep."

where the late Lord Lyttelton, Lord Penzance, Lord John Manners, and Mr. Beresford Hope were his contemporaries, he was a highly successful speaker at the students debating society. In 1841—being then twenty-three years of age—he entered Parliament as a representative for Canterbury.

"At this time," writes Lady Strangford, from whose graceful memoir of her late husband I take the account of his career, "he allied himself closely with Mr. Disraeli. . . . . These were the days of the 'Young England party,' a little party formed by identity of sentiment in the very heart of the Conservative ranks. The leader, Mr. Disraeli, no doubt discerned the usefulness of the youngest of the three, for he described him (nearly thirty years later) as not only 'remarkable for his influence over youth,' but also as having a great power of 'promulgating a new faith with graceful enthusiasm.'" *

The same lady analyses very clearly the reasons which won the support of Mr. Smythe to the new party. "In fact," she says, "the aspirations and sweetness of this school were entirely in harmony with the romantic turn of his mind. Romance tinged equally his politics and his religion. He loved to recall the grandeur of the ancient nobility of England and of France; to sing the days of chivalry, of Catholic kings and cavaliers, of the picturesque splendour of ecclesiastical ceremonial; writing many polished and beautiful verses upon these subjects, while yet he turned

* Memoir, xiii.-xiv.

almost as warmly to throw the halo of poetry over 'the merchants of old England;' and together with his friend, Lord John Manners, he dreamed of a powerful aristocracy and an almsgiving Church, protecting and cultivating the affections of a dependent peasantry." *

Before he had been many years in Parliament, however, Mr. Smythe parted company with Mr. Disraeli and Lord John Manners. "George Smythe," writes his widow, "was too liberal to agree with them in most things: they were for Protection, and he was for Corn Law Repeal." †

In Parliament, Mr. Smythe justified at first the hopes of his friends, for he spoke with grace and effect. He seems, however, to have been wanting in those particular qualities to which Mr. Disraeli, in great part, owes his success. He was not gifted with much energy, much ambition, or much "cheek." We have already seen how constantly Mr. Disraeli put himself forward in the session of 1841, when Sir Robert Peel was gradually approaching power. And it has been seen also how persistently, and it may be said slavishly, he flattered the coming man. Mark how different was the conduct of Mr. Smythe.

"Sir Robert Peel," writes Lady Strangford, "succeeded Lord Melbourne in the month of September. Had George Smythe then come forward and spoken on the discussion which ushered in the change of Government—had he then but amplified his provincial speeches, giving them more solidity and detail, he would have

* *Ibid.* xiv.-xv. † *Ibid.* xiv.

secured for himself some employment in the Conservative administration; and it is scarcely too much to say that all the mistakes and misfortunes of his after-life would probably have been avoided. His talent would be admitted on all sides; he was young, bright, and winning; nothing was wanting but that solidity and weight which an official position affords, to stir up the power and ability, which incontestably existed, into action." *

And in another passage, Lady Strangford writes:

"One more opportunity of retrieving the mistakes of his past life then occurred to him. Lord Aberdeen, in January, 1853, offered him a place in his Government. The fatal, because now irreparable error, was, and for the last time, again committed. In accepting office he would have avoided the abyss of inaction, so inevitably destructive to a temperament such as his." †

These few passages give us a pretty clear idea of Mr. Smythe's character. And we can now well understand why Mr. Disraeli "*discerned the usefulness*"—to borrow Lady Strangford's words—of Mr. Smythe. In the choice of friends who may be useful to him, and rather useless to themselves, Mr. Disraeli has been all his life a man of much "discernment." George Smythe was evidently such a friend. We have seen how careless he was with regard to his own interests; it is quite likely that he was—at least before the disillusion came—quite as active in the interests of Lord Beaconsfield.

Most people have, I suppose, observed that men who

* *Ibid.* x.-xi. † *Ibid.* xxviii.

will do nothing for themselves, will often do everything for another person; that men who, to gain a great advantage, will not write a short letter or keep an appointment, will write pages and walk miles to do a trifling service to somebody else. And it very often, indeed usually happens, that the persons whom those beings, useless to themselves, so eagerly serve, are men who would not move a hair's breadth outside their own selfish purposes. This vicarious activity is not always a sign of generosity of nature; it is sometimes the result of subserviency. I do not mean the low kind of subserviency—the subserviency that calculates on future reward, such as that of Mr. Disraeli to Sir Robert Peel. I mean the subserviency of weak natures to strong, of indolent natures to active.

What is the great secret of the success of men like Mr. Disraeli? It is this: that in a world of men, who are in the vast majority willing to pass life listlessly, without effort, without calculation, without object, there are some beings spurred to incessant activity by consuming selfishness and vanity. Men for the most part are anxious to be used; the man who sets out with the idea of using them has the first great requisite of success.*

* In a recently published and very interesting work on the Lords Strangford, by Mr. E. B. de Fonblanque, we get some glimpses of the disgust with which the parents of Lord John Manners and Mr. Smythe regarded their alliance with Mr. Disraeli. "I lament," writes the Duke of Rutland, father of Lord John Manners, to Lord Strangford, father of Mr. Smythe, on September 6, 1844,—"I lament as much as you can do the influence which Mr. Disraeli has acquired over several of the young British senators, and over your son and mine especially. I do not know Mr. Disraeli by sight, but I have

We can see of what service Mr. Smythe could be to Mr. Disraeli. He was nobly born, and had troops of powerful friends. Then he was evidently highly cultured, enthusiastic, and honest; in short, the very ideal of the cloak behind which the cunjuror could prepare his apparatus and tricks of political legerdemain.

When the *Morning Chronicle* was purchased by the friends of Sir Robert Peel, Mr. Smythe became one of its most frequent contributors. Probably he found that he was more adapted by nature for literature than for politics. Anyway, he appears to have become more and more taciturn in Parliament as he increased his literary activity. "Mr. Disraeli," writes Lady Strangford,*

respect only for his talents, which I think he sadly misuses."—224. "It is grievous," writes his lordship again, "that two young men such as John and Mr. Smythe should he led by one of whose integrity of purpose I have an opinion similar to your own, though I can judge only by his public career. The admirable character of our sons only makes them the more assailable by the arts of a designing person. I will write to John to-morrow, and I shall inquire of him whether there is any truth in the report of his having engaged himself to a great dinner at Manchester under the presidency of Mr. Disraeli."—*Ibid.* 225. The meeting alluded to was that of the Manchester Athenæum (October 3, 1844), at which Mr. Disraeli delivered the inaugural address. Both Lord John Manners and Mr. Smythe had promised to support him by their presence there. The foregoing letter shows the efforts made to keep the one away. The following from Mr. Smythe shows that equal trouble was taken to induce him to have nothing to do with the glorification of Mr. Disraeli: "My solemn word of honour is pledged to this Manchester meeting to Disraeli, and my place is taken by the diligence for two o'clock to-day; but you shall decide if, having given my word of honour to a man to whom I am under obligations, who knows many of my secrets, and who . . . . whether I can get out of this pledge and covenant."—*Ibid.* 226.

* Memoir, xxvii.

"regretted, or appeared to regret, this misplaced industry, for unhappily, from 1847 to 1852, his old friend and pupil committed a sort of Parliamentary suicide, and but rarely rose to speak."

In May, 1855, Mr. Smythe's father died, and he became Lord Strangford—the name by which he is now remembered. During his later years he dropped almost completely out of the political world; he did not, I believe, speak even once in the House of Lords. His health was always rather delicate; and he died in November, 1857, when he had reached about his fortieth year.

"Perhaps," writes Lady Strangford, "the best summing-up of his life is the expression used by one of the most worthy and now distinguished of his college friends: 'George Smythe was a *splendid failure*.'"*

As much of what Mr. Smythe wrote appeared anonymously, or treated of passing subjects, the world knows but little of the work he has done.

A volume of essays and poems, and a novel—published some years after his death—are all that one can find in the catalogues.

"Angela Pisani," the novel, was praised with, I believe, unanimity. "Historic Fancies," published in 1844, was the title of Mr. Smythe's contribution to the literature of "Young England." The volume consists partly of verse, and partly of prose. This book is now best remembered by a foolish reference to the old custom of touching for the king's evil; but posterity thus does in-

* xxix.

justice to one of the most interesting works ever written. The verse and prose are both of a very high order of merit. The analysis of character is strikingly acute; and the language frequently has a dramatic force and a majestic flow that make it sound like an echo of Shakespeare. Mr. Smythe's name is now almost forgotten, and his works are unread; but, in my judgment at least, he was, as a literary artist, as immeasurably superior to Lord Beaconsfield as Lord Beaconsfield is to Lord John Manners. I have not space to give quotations in support of this estimate; but those who may think it exaggerated I refer to Mr. Smythe's sketch of Mirabeau,* and to the "Opposition Scene in the Last Century." †

The extracts I have given from Lady Strangford's Memoir show sufficiently the hopes and aims with which her husband joined the Tory party. Those hopes, as probably nearly all the hopes of his life, were bitterly disappointed. When Sir Robert Peel abandoned the stupid and destructive creed of Protection, the Tory party, in whose wisdom and popular leanings Lord Strangford had so fondly believed, turned on its chief and hooted him from power. What, we wonder, did Lord Strangford think of the leader of the attack on the converted statesman? Let us hope that, among Lord Strangford's papers, may be some day found an analysis of the character of Lord Beaconsfield equal in penetration of motive to his article on Mirabeau.

If there ever were a man whose training and antecedents were calculated to give him opinions very much

* "Historic Fancies," 197-8. † *Ibid.* 123-4.

the opposite of the opinions of Young England, that man was Mr. Disraeli. We of this generation open our eyes in sheer wonderment at the mere existence of persons who could seriously hold and preach doctrines so fantastic. But we are bound to make allowance for the strange surroundings, times, and position of some of the Young Englanders. These were the days when the religious, and, indeed, political world of England, was stirred to its deepest depth by the then novel portent of Tractarianism. The upheaval of accepted doctrines in religion or politics has always led, we all know, to extravagances. Luther produced the Anabaptists; the French Revolution produced a dozen varieties of political insanity; and, similarly, Tractarianism begat Young-Englandism.

But while this explains sufficiently the views of men like Lord John Manners and George Smythe, it leaves us still as much as ever in the dark about Mr. Disraeli.

We can understand how Lord John Manners could have come to believe in the restoration of feudal relations between the landlord and the occupiers of the soil. He was a nobleman, and the descendant of noblemen; he was the owner of acres, and the descendant of owners of acres. It is intelligible that a man bred in the stately halls of Belvoir Castle should, with the self-confidence and kindliness of youth, have believed in the vision of a return to olden, and, seen from the heights above Grantham, more picturesque ways.

But Mr. Disraeli's training was almost the antithesis of all this. He was the son of a Hebrew *litterateur;*

had sat at the desk in an attorney's office; and had passed through a youth of comparative poverty, if not pecuniary embarrassment.

Again, we can understand the religious leanings of Lord John Manners, when we remember his early surroundings. Lord John Manners was a university student at the time when some of the greatest minds England has produced were teaching the Tractarian gospel. Even a man of Lord John's lofty mental calibre need not be ashamed of having been carried away by the tide which swept along with it Pusey and Keble, Froude and Williams, Newman and Manning. The doctrines of those men, besides, were most persuasively recommended by their lives. Who could believe that anything pernicious could issue from men whose existence was devoted to the practice as well as the teaching of virtue—to whom their ideas were a more prized possession than anything the world could give?

Lord John Manners and Mr. Smythe were not, it is true, brought under the direct influence of the foremost apostles of Tractarianism, having been educated, not at Oxford, but at Cambridge. But, of course, the influence of the words and acts of the leaders of a great religious movement reached with almost its original force from the one University to the other.

The teachers of Mr. Disraeli's early youth were very different from those of the University students in Tractarian days. Mr. Disraeli's earliest teacher was his father; and his father, we have seen, had a strong lean-

ing towards mere indifference in religion. But if he were as zealous about the religious belief of his son, as he appears to have been indifferent, would he have taught his son the religious creed of Young England? A leaning towards Roman Catholic doctrine and Roman Catholic ritual is the very last thing a Jewish father would be inclined to give his child.

We know, too, that the character of many of Mr. Disraeli's early teachers, as well as the moral atmosphere he first breathed, were as different as possible from those of the pupils of Pusey and Newman, and their Cambridge followers. I have already, in an early chapter, remarked upon the early influences to which Mr. Disraeli was subjected, and will not again dilate on that point. I will but observe that Mr. Disraeli was brought in contact with the hardest and worst realities of life from an early age; that *his* father in God was Samuel Rogers; and that Lady Blessington, Count D'Orsay, M. de Morny, Mr. Tom Duncombe, and Lord Lyndhurst were not exactly the same kind of teachers as Pusey, Newman, Keble, and Manning.

Finally, one of the foremost doctrines of Young England—as the name implies—was that the salvation of the country should come from its youth. That, again, is a doctrine intelligible in Lord John Manners, who in 1842 was but twenty-four years of age, and in George Sydney Smythe, who in the same year was just the same age.

In the case of Mr. Disraeli, however, it is more difficult of comprehension. The chief apostle of the gospel

of youth was no longer young. However, it will be seen that this son of a plebeian taught feudalism, this son of a Jew taught Ritualism, this man of thirty-seven taught the creed of youth with as much zeal as the most noble, the most Christian, and the youngest among the Young Englanders.

"Coningsby," published in 1844, was the work in which Lord Beaconsfield proposed to explain to the world the dogmas of the new creed. It is a strange book. Passages of brilliant wit alternate with passages of portentous dulness, and sometimes incredible vacuity; grave political discussions are jostled by personal scandal; and outrageously fashionable people chatter in the same breath of the most sacred truths of religion and the most frivolous topics of society. Mr. Disraeli knew his market; adapted his wares to it; and the book succeeded enormously.

Among the first personages we are introduced to are Lord Monmouth and Mr. Rigby. Everybody knew that Lord Hertford and Mr. John Wilson Croker were portrayed under these names. The scandal-loving world was of course delighted with an author who thus gave them glimpses into the private life of a great nobleman, who was immensely rich, terribly vicious, and lived in a sort of Oriental privacy. And equally great was the delight of malicious gossips, when, under a fictitious name, they could see a well-known and not much-loved politician receive the sharpest stabs at his private and public character.

Those who wish to be helped in their estimate of

Lord Beaconsfield as an artist and as a man, will do well to read "Vanity Fair" immediately after they have read "Coningsby." As everybody knows, Lord Hertford sat for Thackeray as well as for Lord Beaconsfield: the Marquis of Steyne and Lord Monmouth are meant to represent the same being. Lord Monmouth is one of Lord Beaconsfield's most finished and most successful creations; but what a poor, unreal puppet he is by the side of Lord Steyne! And still more remarkable is the difference between the manner in which the two authors view the vices of their creations. Where in Lord Beaconsfield's work is that *sæva indignatio*, that loathing of vice and selfishness, which burn through the words of Thackeray? You can see that Thackeray, who was a man of heart, of earnest and true nature, as well as an artist, hates, and means you to hate, the thing he describes. So far as you can judge from "Coningsby," Lord Beaconsfield might have considered Lord Monmouth rather an estimable person.

The satirist who has a bitter word for everybody, is not an agreeable person, but he may be very honest and very independent; and honesty and independence cover a multitude of sins. But the man is a very different kind of being who, while he assails mercilessly the weak, and those he dislikes, at the same time fawns upon the powerful and those who can serve him. When "Coningsby" was written, Mr. Wilson Croker had for many years retired from political life; he was thus a tolerably safe target for attack, and

accordingly we find Lord Beaconsfield lavishing his satire upon him with an unsparing hand. But Lord Lonsdale was a great nobleman, of vast wealth, long lineage, and in 1844, as throughout the greater part of his life, one of the most influential leaders of the Tory party. To Lord Lonsdale, accordingly, Lord Beaconsfield unceasingly offers incense. We are told of Lord Lonsdale—who is disguised under the name of Lord Eskdale—that he was "a noble Crœsus, acquainted with all the gradations of life;" "a voluptuary who could be a Spartan;" that he was "clear-sighted, unprejudiced, sagacious;" "a quarrel about a bet or a mistress was solved by him in a moment, and in a manner which satisfied both parties;"* and so on through several sentences more of abject, though artistically arranged flattery.

It will not be necessary to more than briefly allude to many of the political discussions in "Coningsby." We have the condemnation of the Reform Act, with which the reader is now familiar: many of the subterfuges and fallacies of the "Vindication" reappear under a different garb. Our old friend the "Estate" again advances to us; we have once more the audacious argument that the House of Lords and the House of Commons are equally representative of the country; and we have pages about "perverted views of Toryism,"† "pseudo-Tories,"‡ and the rest.

On all the Tory leaders of the early part of this century Mr. Disraeli pours forth unmeasured abuse.

* "Coningsby," new edition, 25. † *Ibid.* 66. ‡ *Ibid.* 68.

Mr. Vansittart is ridiculed,* so are Lord Sidmouth† and Lord Castlereagh;‡ and Lord Liverpool is dismissed as an arch-mediocrity.§ But amid all this desert of abuse there is an oasis of eulogium. The bare mention of Sir Robert Peel is sufficient to send Mr. Disraeli into an ecstasy of praise. He is a "distinguished personage;"‖ those who attribute to him sinister intentions in 1834, make these charges, "not only in ignorance of the personal character but of the real position of the future Minister."¶ "At last he came," writes the author of "Coningsby," speaking of Peel's accession to office in 1834; "the great man in a great position, summoned from Rome to govern England."** And so Mr. Disraeli proceeds in untiring, unsparing, indecent adulation.

One of the chief characters in "Coningsby" is a Jew named Sidonia. It is not exactly known whom Lord Beaconsfield meant to describe, but we are asked to believe that he is a wonderful person indeed; and so there is an impression that Lord Beaconsfield wished Sidonia to stand for himself. Of the many harangues which Sidonia delivers, I can only give the merest sketch. In one famous discourse, he proves by a long catalogue of names that all men of genius had attained greatness in youth;†† in another passage, it is demonstrated in an equally satisfactory manner that all men of genius were Jews.‡‡ A remarkable feature in Sidonia is

* *Ibid.* 70.
† *Ibid.*
‡ *Ibid.*
§ *Ibid.* 71.
‖ *Ibid.* 66.
¶ *Ibid.* 67.
‡‡ *Ibid.* 249—253.
** *Ibid.* 94.
†† *Ibid.* 118—120.

his dissatisfaction with the most cherished English institutions. For Parliamentary government, in particular, he has the most unspeakable scorn. "Parliamentary representation," he declares, "was the happy device of a ruder age, to which it was admirably adapted, an age of semi-civilization, when there was a leading class in the community; but it exhibits many symptoms of desuetude."*

This was written in 1844, and was apparently wildly untrue. It is one, however, of the many advantages we have reaped from the Premiership of Lord Beaconsfield, that some of the wildest and worst prophecies of Mr. Disraeli have been fulfilled to the letter. The annexation of Cyprus and the assumption of a protectorate in Asia, without any consultation of Parliament, certainly show that, in the eyes of one man at least, Parliamentary representation is the "happy device of a ruder age;" and the fact that the Parliament, so contemned, approved of its humiliation, certainly raises the suspicion that Parliamentary representation "exhibits many symptoms of desuetude."

A natural consequence of disbelief in the virtues of Parliament is an equally strong admiration of absolute government.

"In an enlightened age," exclaims Sidonia in one passage, "the Monarch on the throne, free from the vulgar prejudices, and the corrupt interests of the subject, becomes again divine."†

"The only power," says Mr. Disraeli, through

* *Ibid.* 355. † *Ibid.* 303.

Coningsby, the hero of his book, "that has no class sympathy is the Sovereign." *

"The proper leader of the people," declares this same character elsewhere, "is the individual who sits upon the throne." †

In order to explain to us some of the other points in the "Young England" creed, the author of "Coningsby" introduces us to the family of the Duke of Beaumanoir. Under this title the Duke of Rutland was represented, and Belvoir Castle is disguised under the name of Beaumanoir. We are introduced, besides, to Lord John Manners, under the disguise of Lord Henry Sydney; and we also make the acquaintance of several female members of the Duke's family.

Here, again, let us remark what an advantage it was to our nobility that Mr. Disraeli was their friend. We have seen how Mr. Disraeli clothes some noblemen in more than earthly beauty—how he endows them with intellects of superhuman sagacity, and with that unshakeable equanimity which the nobleman so fondly loves to affect, and will, therefore, most gladly hear he possesses.

Nay, Mr. Disraeli has done more; he has even told the world how wicked these lords of creation are: thus at a double stroke gaining the hearts of the noblemen, who don't object to the reputation of viciousness, and of the shopboys and milliners, whose dearest delight is to have glimpses of the bad doings of the aristocrats. In some other passages in "Coningsby" and others of his

* *Ibid.* 353. † *Ibid.* 354.

works, Mr. Disraeli ventures further into the literary arena of Jenkins and the *London Journal*. Not satisfied with describing the male nobility, our author draws with fervour the beauty, the grace, the tenderness, etc., etc., etc., of the female members of our noble families. What a delightful creature dear Mr. Disraeli must have appeared to Lady Julia, whose brow he had described as whiter than Parian marble! And then, too, the wicked man, to make her the heroine of a romance! What right had he to say all the men were in love with her, etc., etc., etc. Why, where was poor Jenkins now, since this rival vendor of printed flattery had come into the market. Get thee hence, Jenkins! you can only give us a plain paragraph in the *Morning Post*, while our dear Mr. Disraeli——

And, of course, Mr. Disraeli gained the hearts of the fathers, husbands, and brothers of those ladies. Though Mr. Disraeli's dukes were clothed in the Sphinx-like impenetrability that he attributes sometimes to them, and generally assumes himself, yet would their vanity be reached by the delicate compliments paid to their female belongings.

In any case, Mr. Disraeli was determined that our nobility, however it was done, should be got at. We are, therefore, favoured not only with a description of the merits of our nobles, male and female—we also have pages devoted to glowing accounts of the extent of their ancestral acres and the splendour of their ancestral halls. Their furniture is described with the lingering delight and the pathetic extravagance of a George Robins, and

the glories of their dinners are sung with the gusto of a pastrycook.

I think I can leave the reader to form his own estimate of a nature that delights in such work.

The chief object of flattery in "Coningsby" is, as I have said, the Beaumanoir or Rutland family. It is strange that Mr. Disraeli should have chosen the Duke of Rutland, above all others, for the object of his adulatory description. We have seen that the feelings of his lordship to Mr. Disraeli were those of dislike and distrust. The Duke, to use the words of one of Lord Beaconsfield's ablest critics,* "deplores to one correspondent the connection of Lord John Manners with Lord Beaconsfield, much as the father of Lord Frederick Verisopht might have lamented his son's addiction to the society of Sir Mulberry Hawk." Of course Mr. Disraeli was perfectly aware of the repulsion he excited. One can fancy how poor Lord John Manners must have whispered, with blushes and sighs, into the eager ears of Mr. Disraeli, who was using him and laughing at him, the lectures he had to endure at home for his intimacy with "a designing person." But, as I have noted already, the only effect upon Mr. Disraeli of finding that a useful person disliked him was to make him lay on the flattery still more thickly. Their love or loathing was all the same to him, provided he could flatter, or shame, or bully them into helping him.

And now let us give an extract or two from the

* "The Political Adventures of Lord Beaconsfield."—*Fortnightly Review*, N. S., cxxxviii. 883-4.

conversations at Beaumanoir, which enunciate the doctrines of "Young England."

"'Henry thinks,' said Lord Everingham, 'that the people are to be fed by dancing round a May-pole.'

"'But will the people be more fed because they do not dance round a May-pole?' urged Lord Henry.

"'Obsolete customs!' said Lord Everingham.

"'And why should dancing round a May-pole be more obsolete than holding a Chapter of the Garter?' asked Lord Henry.

"The Duke, who was a blue ribbon, felt this a home-thrust. 'I must say,' said his Grace, 'that I for one deeply regret that our popular customs have been permitted to fall so into desuetude.'

"'The spirit of the age is against such things,' said Lord Everingham.

"'And what is the spirit of the age?' asked Coningsby.

"'The spirit of utility,' said Lord Everingham." *

This Lord Everingham is a Whig, and is meant to represent the odious and prosaic sense of that party in opposition to the high-souled and poetic gospel of the party to which Mr. Disraeli and his friends belonged. Mr. Lyle, a Roman Catholic, is another representative of "Young England;" mark what this fellow-believer of Mr. Disraeli has done :—

"As they approached the brow of the hill that hung over St. Geneviève, they heard the great bell sound.

"'What is that?' asked the Duchess.

"'It is almsgiving day,' replied Mr. Lyle, looking a little embarrassed, and for the first time blushing; 'the people of the parishes with which I am connected come to St. Geneviève twice a week at this hour.'" †

* "Coningsby," new edition, 134. † *Ibid.* 144.

And here is another delicious passage :—

"'*Everything has gone by that is beautiful*,' said Lord Henry.

"'Life is much easier,' said Lord Everingham.

"'Life easy!' said Lord Henry. 'Life appears to me to be a fierce struggle.'

"'Manners are easy,' said Coningsby, 'and life is hard.'

"'And I wish to see things exactly the reverse,' said Lord Henry, 'the means and modes of subsistence less difficult, the conduct of life more ceremonious.'" *

I have remarked that one of the characteristics of "Coningsby," and, indeed, of most of Lord Beaconsfield's works, is the facility with which people pass without a second's interval from the most sacred to the most frivolous subjects. A discussion on a new religion is followed by a discussion on a new fashion in bonnets; and a ponderous dissertation on political philosophy is interrupted by an invitation to dance. The conversation just quoted is a specimen of this feature in Mr. Disraeli's style. We will give another:—

"'One sees our host to great advantage in his own house,' said Lady Everingham. 'He is scarcely the same person. I have not observed him once blush. He speaks and moves with ease. It is a pity that he is not more graceful. *Above all things, I like a graceful man.*'

"'*That chapel*,' said Coningsby, '*was a fine thing.*'

"'*Very*,' said Lady Everingham. '*Did you observe the picture over the altar—the Virgin with blue eyes? I never observed blue eyes before in such a picture. What is your favourite colour for eyes?*'

"Coningsby felt embarrassed; he said something rather pointless about admiring everything that is beautiful.

"But every one has a favourite style; I want to know yours.

* *Ibid.* 141-2.

Regular features—do you like regular features? Or is it expression that pleases you?'

"'Expression; I think I like expression. Expression must be always delightful.'

"'Do you dance?'

"'No; I am no great dancer. I fear I have few accomplishments. I am fond of fencing.'" *

And so on. One quotation more :—

"'I have immense faith in the new generation,' said Millbank eagerly.

"'*It is a holy thing to see a State saved by its youth,*' said Coningsby; and then he added, in a tone of humility, if not of depression, 'but what a task! What a variety of qualities, what a combination of circumstances, is requisite! What bright abilities, and what noble patience! What confidence from the people, what favour from the Most High!'

"'But He will favour us,' said Millbank. "And I say to you, as Nathan said unto David, "Thou art the man!' . . . .

"'Heaven is above all,' said Coningsby." †

This, then, was the way in which England was to be regenerated: a docile people was to be led by a universally benevolent aristocracy; alms were to be distributed freely; the Government of the State was to be transferred from old age and experience to youths of genius; and everybody was to be pious and gentle, and smiling and prosperous. The phantasmagoria is more like the topsyturvy dream of one of Mr. W. S. Gilbert's ingenious comedies than anything in real life. Stranger than everything else in the ridiculous farce is the figure by whom it is put on the stage. Fancy Mr. Disraeli, of all men, preaching a gospel of Christianity and feudalism, of lofty piety and trustful youth! The pic-

* *Ibid.* 148. † *Ibid.* 359-60.

ture is certainly one of the strangest in all the annals of mountebankery.

I now gladly take farewell of "Coningsby." * There is in the course of the novel a love story, told with much rhodomontade. With this I have not thought it necessary to trouble the reader.

* The following critique on "Coningsby," which I have the best authority for stating was written by Thackeray, will be read with interest. It appeared in the *Pictorial Times* of May 25, 1844. *Coningsby; or, The New Generation.* By B. Disraeli, Esq., M.P.—Colburn. "If this book do not become popular, what other novel has a chance? 'Coningsby' possesses all the happy elements of popularity. It is personal, it is witty, it is sentimental, it is outrageously fashionable. Charmingly malicious, exquisitely novel, seemingly very deep, but in reality very easy of comprehension, and admirably absurd; for you do not only laugh at the personages whom the author holds up to ridicule, but you laugh at the author too, whose coxcombries are incessantly amusing. They are quite unlike the vapid, cool coxcombries of an English dandy, they are picturesque, wild, and outrageous; and as the bodily Disraeli used to be seen some years ago about town arrayed in green velvet inexpressibles with a gold stripe down the seam, an ivory cane, and for what we know a peacock's feather in his hat—Disraeli the writer in like manner assumes a magnificence never thought of by our rigid northern dandies, and astonishes by a luxury of conceit which is quite oriental. He paints his own portrait in this book in the most splendid fashion. It is the queerest in the whole queer gallery of likenesses: he appears as the greatest philosopher, the greatest poet, the greatest horseman, the greatest statesman, the greatest *roué* in the world; with all the qualities of Pitt, and Byron, and Burke, and the great Mr. Widdicomb, of Batty's amphitheatre. Perhaps one is reminded of the last-named famous individual more than of any other. The book has kept the town in talk for a whole week past. The circulating libraries are dunned for copies; the volumes are snatched off the tables of the club reading-rooms, and everybody recognizes everybody's portrait. The chief character of the book, after the author's own, is that of the late Lord Hertford, here figuring under the title of the Marquis of Monmouth; his friend Lord Eskdale is no other than Lord Lonsdale; Lord John Manners appears as Lord Sydney; and the house of the Duke of Rutland at

The second book in which Mr. Disraeli sought to explain the doctrines of "Young England," was "Sybil."

"Next year (1845)," writes Mr. Disraeli, in the General Preface to his works,* "in 'Sybil, or the Two Nations,' I considered the condition of the people, and

Belvoir is recognized by everybody in the novel under its title of Beaumanoir; above all there is the great character of Rigby, in which the Right Honourable John Wilson Croker is shown up in such a way as must make him happy in his retirement to find that all the world is so much amused by him. The way in which all the newspapers have extracted the passages relative to Mr. Wilson Croker is quite curious. The *Chronicle* began on Monday; on Wednesday the *Times* charitably followed; on Thursday the *Post* gave the selfsame extracts; so that by this time every newspaper reader in the British empire has perused the history of Mr. Rigby, and knows how he writes slashing articles against women for preference, and how convenient a friend he is to a great man. 'A better portrait of a parasite has never been written since Juvenal's days, and we can fancy that even ages hence people will read his book as a singular picture of manners and society in our times. Brummel's life, lately published, will help the historian to an acquaintance with the period, a couple of score of years previous; and the real history and the fictitious one will be found, we think, alike profitable. What person is there in town or country, from the squire down to the lady's maid, who will not be anxious to peruse a work in which the secrets of high life are so exposed? In all the fashionable novels ever published, there is nothing so piquant or so magnificently genteel. Every politician will read with avidity—the details are so personal. Whigs and Conservatives are abused with such equal bitterness and truth, that in consideration of the manner in which his neighbour is attacked, a man of either party will pardon the onslaught made on his own friends. Lord John and Sir Robert are both brought forward by this unblushing critic, and praised or bullied, according to his notions, right and wrong. We shall not forestall the reader's interest by extracting a single line from the volumes, which, with all their philosophy and pertness, their wisdom and absurdity, are such as cannot fail to interest him, and to make him think and laugh, not only with the author but at him. Surely nothing more ought to be requisite to make any novel popular."

* P. xiii.

the whole work, generally speaking, was devoted to that portion of my scheme. At that time the Chartist agitation was still fresh in the public memory, and its repetition was far from improbable. I had mentioned to my friend, the late Thomas Duncombe, and who was my friend before I entered the House of Commons, something of what I was contemplating; and he offered and obtained for my perusal the whole of the correspondence of Feargus O'Connor when conductor of the *Northern Star*, with the leaders and chief actors of the Chartist movement. I had visited and observed with care all the localities introduced; and as an accurate and never exaggerated picture of a remarkable period in our domestic history, and of a popular organisation which in its extent and completeness has perhaps never been equalled, the pages of 'Sybil' may, I venture to believe, be consulted with confidence."

The principal *dramatis personæ* in "Sybil" are Gerard, a Chartist working man; Sybil, his daughter; Mowbray, a Chartist editor; Lord Marney, a typical aristocrat; and Egremont, Lord Marney's brother. Egremont plays the same part in "Sybil" as Harry Coningsby in the novel to which he gives his name. He is the representative of Young-Englandism, and is, as a natural result, handsome, chivalrous, enthusiastic, profoundly philosophic, and—also a natural result of professing the creed of Young England—he is young and noble. Strangely enough, Mr. Egremont professes exactly the same ideas, in almost exactly the same

words, as Mr. Disraeli. Therefore, those who did not know Mr. Disraeli were quite at liberty to conclude that he also was handsome, chivalrous, enthusiastic, profoundly philosophic, young, and noble.

In "Sybil," even more than in "Coningsby," Mr. Disraeli frequently falls into the melting mood of tender regret for the past. Many of the passages vividly recall verses from the immortal poem of Lord John Manners. Thus, speaking of an abbey which had become the property of Lord Marney, he exclaims: "And the hymn was no more to be chaunted in the Lady's chapel; and the candles were no more to be lit on the high altar; and the gate of the poor was to be closed for ever; and the wanderer was no more to find a home." *

"Were there any rick-burners," asks Mr. Disraeli, "in the times of the lord abbots? And if not, why not? And why should the stacks of the Earls of Marney be destroyed, and those of the abbots of Marney spared?" †

Mr. Disraeli shows, in one of the passages quoted, that love for a richer ritual, for greater independence in the Church of State control, which were among the most distinctive features of the Tractarian movement. Again and again he recurs to the idea that the old relations of Church and State were better than those of modern days; and again and again he expresses himself, and through the mouth of one of his favourite characters—a Ritualistic clergyman, St. Lys by name—a preference for the older forms of public worship.

"*And even in the parish church,*" he writes, "*the*

* 68. New edition. † *Ibid.* 69.

frigid spell of Erastian self-complacency fatally prevailed." *

"The Church deserted the people," he makes Mr. St. Lys say, "and from that moment *the Church has been in danger* and *the people degraded.* Formerly religion undertook to satisfy the noble wants of human nature, and by its festivals relieved the painful weariness of toil. The day of rest was consecrated, if not always to elevated thoughts, at least to sweet and noble sentiments. *The Church convened to its solemnities, under its splendid and almost celestial roofs, amid the finest monuments of art that human hands have raised, the whole Christian population;* for there, in the presence of God, all were brethren. It shared equally among all *its prayers, its incense, and its music,* its sacred instructions, *and the highest enjoyments that the arts could afford.*" †

Apparently somewhat startled by this language, one of the characters asks the enthusiastic clergyman, "You believe, then, in the efficacy of forms and ceremonies?"

Mark the answer.

"What you call forms and ceremonies *represent the divinest instincts of our nature.* Push your aversion to forms and ceremonies to a legitimate conclusion, and you would prefer kneeling in a barn rather than in a cathedral. Your tenets would strike at the very existence of all art, *which is essentially spiritual.*" ‡

A considerable portion of "Sybil" is taken up with a description of the condition of the poorer classes.

* *Ibid.* 125. † *Ibid.* 129. ‡ *Ibid.*

Lord Beaconsfield speaks, as has been seen, of these descriptions as "accurate, and never exaggerated." They appear to me, on the contrary, most inaccurate, and certainly exaggerated; unreal, spasmodic; daubs, not pictures. To quote the words of a famous critic,* Lord Beaconsfield's pictures in "Sybil" "only show how strongly and coarsely the painter can write, and are obviously not the result of any genuine regard for the poor and the afflicted."

Egremont, as I have said, is the representative of Young England. His principal duty is to preach the doctrines of the school in season and out of season. The dogma on which he chiefly insists is that the poor can only be rescued by the aristocracy. Addressing Sybil, the Chartist's daughter, with whom he is in love, this splendid young aristocrat exclaims, "You look upon me as an enemy, as a natural foe, because I am born among the privileged. *I am a man, Sybil, as well as a noble.* . . . . The world that exists is not the world of which you have read; the class that calls itself your superior is not the same class as ruled in the time of your fathers. There is a change in them as in all other things, and I participate in that change. I shared it before I knew you, Sybil; and if it touched me then, at least believe it does not influence me less now." †

In giving the reply to this speech, we find Lord Beaconsfield, for a moment, writing sense. Egremont's

* W. R. G., in *Westminster Review*, xliv. 142-3.
† *Ibid.* 319.

piece of impertinent condescension, of which Lord Beaconsfield or Jenkins could alone think admiringly, is thus fitly answered by Lord Beaconsfield's heroine: "'If there be a change,' said Sybil, 'it is because in some degree the people have learnt their strength.'" *

After this short gleam of independence and sense, Lord Beaconsfield again lapses into flunkeyism and nonsense.

"'Ah! dismiss from your mind those fallacious fancies,' said Egremont. 'The People are not strong; the People never can be strong. Their attempts at self-vindication will end only in their suffering and confusion. . . . . There is a day-spring in the history of this nation,'—this means, of course, the rise of Mr. Disraeli's Young England party,—'which perhaps *those only who are on the mountain-tops can as yet recognize.* You deem you are in darkness, and I see a dawn. The new generation of the aristocracy of England are not tyrants, not oppressors, Sybil, as you persist in believing. . . . . Enough that their sympathies are awakened; time and thought will bring the rest. *They are the natural leaders of the People, Sybil; believe me, they are the only ones.*'" †

The reader will not forget that, in the debate on the National Petition, Mr. Disraeli assumed a somewhat novel attitude: that, while carefully abstaining from any vote in favour of the Charter, he professed to have sympathy with the Chartists. There is an exquisite passage in "Sybil" in allusion to this episode in the Parliamentary life of the orator. Sybil is represented as reading

* *Ibid.* 319-20. † *Ibid.*

"a report of the debate in the House of Commons on the presentation of the National Petition." *

"Yes!" exclaims Lord Beaconsfield; "there was one voice that had sounded in that proud Parliament, that, free from the slang of faction, had dared to express immortal truths." † Of course Lord Beaconsfield meant himself when he wrote this passage, for he had been alone in the way in which he had spoken of the Chartists' Petition. He throws in "the voice of a *noble*, who, without being a demagogue, had upheld the popular cause," ‡ but this is a very transparent device.

Mark the effect which the oration of Mr. Disraeli—or Egremont, as he calls himself—had on Sybil.

"With a heart not without emotion, with a kindling cheek, and eyes suffused with tears, Sybil read the speech of Egremont. She ceased; *still holding the paper with one hand, she laid on it the other with tenderness*, and looked up to breathe as it were for relief. *Before her stood the orator himself.*" §

These quotations, I think, sufficiently indicate the character of "Sybil." The analysis of "Tancred,"—the third of the Young England series of novels,—will be introduced more fitly further on.

* *Ibid.* 337. † *Ibid.* ‡ *Ibid.* § *Ibid.*

CHAPTER X.

PREPARING THE MUTINY.

I NOW resume the history of Lord Beaconsfield's Parliamentary career. At the point where I left off, Mr. Disraeli was still the ardent and constant supporter of Sir Robert Peel. I now approach the period when enmity succeeded to professed friendship, and vehement vituperation to unstinted adulation.

Probably, as has been observed by Mr. Francis in his short biography of Mr. Disraeli, the hate of that gentleman to Sir Robert Peel had begun many a season before he allowed it to appear. It is not improbable that rage and disappointment were burning in his heart at the very moment when words of praise were flowing from his lips. Is Mr. Disraeli the man, with his overweening conceit and vindictive nature, to forgive Sir Robert Peel's neglect of him in 1841? After his years of struggle for notoriety, after his industry in Parliament, after all his energy in flattery, not to receive even an under-secretaryship — this was a never-to-be-forgiven offence.

There can be little doubt that Sir Robert Peel adopted

means—whether unintentionally or not—to add fuel to the flame of Mr. Disraeli's passion. As Mr. Francis remarks, the Premier "on many occasions treated the aspiring regenerator of the age with marked indifference, if not contempt." *

Even the cold and passionless pages of Hansard bear evidence of the "marked indifference, if not contempt," with which Sir Robert Peel treated his "humble but fervent supporter." When, for instance, in the month of April of this session, Mr. Disraeli put several questions with the object of drawing from the English Government a denunciation of Russian interference in Turkey, the Premier dismissed his interrogator with very scant courtesy, and even with some appearance of irritation.†

Mr. Disraeli allowed his anger to smoulder from April until August. In that month he for the first time made a speech in direct antagonism to Sir Robert Peel. The Premier had introduced one of those Irish Coercion Bills with which Parliament is too familiar. Thereupon Mr. Disraeli took up the cause of Ireland. He began by saying that the Premier had in opposition selected the Irish question as the ground of battle between him and the Liberal Ministry; that he had promised two measures of relief in particular: one on the Municipal institutions, and the other on the Registration of Ireland. But both these measures had

* "Critical Biography of the Right Hon. B. Disraeli," by G. H. Francis; 50.

† See Hansard, 3 S. lxviii. 859 and 1028-9.

been abandoned; and the "right hon. gentleman thus admitted that his course while in opposition, as far as this measure was concerned, was diametrically wrong, and that those to whom he had been opposed had acted correctly." The inference which Mr. Disraeli drew from this was that "the followers and supporters of the right hon. gentleman were now left to themselves." They were "plainly free from any bonds of party on that subject, for the right hon. gentleman himself had broken them;" they "had a right—they were in fact bound to form their own opinion of what they considered really, in the sincerity of their conviction, was most adapted to the advantage of the two countries." *

This rencontre between Mr. Disraeli and his chief was soon followed by another. And, as in an earlier part of the session, the affairs of Servia supplied the *casus belli*. The general nature of the questions of Mr. Disraeli, and of Sir Robert Peel's replies, in reference to that country, has been already described. Mr. Disraeli's questions were not free from a spirit of importunity, nor Sir Robert Peel's replies from a spirit of contempt. On August 15th, Lord Palmerston moved for papers in reference to Servia, and Mr. Disraeli embraced the opportunity for taking his revenge. When Sir Robert Peel had replied to Lord Palmerston, Mr. Disraeli immediately rose, and criticised with great freedom the Premier and his statements. He reminded the House of the inquiry he had

* *Ibid.* lxxi. 431-2.

made on the subject of the Premier—"an inquiry couched, he believed, in Parliamentary language, and made with all that respect which he felt for the right hon. gentleman." To this inquiry, "the right hon. gentleman replied with all that explicitness of which he was a master, and all that courtesy which he reserved only for his supporters."*

This was an excellent hit, for it struck at the points in Sir Robert Peel's demeanour which were most bitterly complained of Mr. Disraeli compliments Sir Robert Peel on his explicitness, the most frequent charge against him being that his answers were vague, evasive, and disguised—that he could never, in fact,

* *Ibid.* 835. It will not be without interest to give a further quotation from Mr. Disraeli's speech on the Eastern question. He maintained that it was the duty of England to maintain the independence and integrity of the Turkish empire, and that "that independence and integrity were endangered by the late conduct of the British Ministry" in allowing any intervention of Russia in Servia. "What, then," asked Mr. Disraeli, "ought to be their"—the Ministerial—"policy? *To maintain Turkey in that state by their diplomatic action, that she might be able to hold independently the Dardanelles.* That, however, could never be the case, if the policy of Her Majesty's Government with respect to Servia (but he hoped in no other case) was to be pursued. It was useless for them to pretend to disguise from themselves the state of Turkey. Turkey was prostrate; but not so much from natural decline, as from having been, as it were, stabbed in the back. It was the diplomacy of Europe during the last twenty years that had reduced Turkey to her present fallen state—*not the decline of her resources. They were still unequalled.*"—Hansard, 3 S. lxxi. 836—838. I will pause for but a moment in this place to call the reader's attention to the remarkable constancy with which Lord Beaconsfield has maintained his love for the people, to whom civilisation owes the transformation of lands flowing with milk and honey into scenes of bloodshed and desolation.

be got to give a straightforward answer to a plain question. And Mr. Disraeli compliments Sir Robert on "that courtesy which he reserved only for his supporters," the commonest complaint against the Premier being that he was polite to his opponents, and insultingly haughty to his friends. Mr. Disraeli was a skilful hand at fanning the flames of discontent.

This strong attack on the Government fulfilled Mr. Disraeli's highest expectations; for it drew upon him a large amount of notice from both his own and the opposite side. Lord Sandon, one of the Ministers, denounced his speech as "heaping the grossest terms of contumely and opprobrium on those whom" he "affected to serve." Such conduct was, the noble lord declared, "not seemly." Thereupon, Mr. Disraeli had the rare luck of being defended by Mr. Joseph Hume, Mr. Curteis, another Liberal member, by Mr. George Smythe, his colleague in Young-Englandism, and, better than all, by Lord Palmerston. In fact, he and his speech became the subject of a little debate.*

In the session of 1844, Irish questions again formed a prominent subject of debate. The state of Ireland had become alarming. O'Connell's agitation for Repeal of the Union had in 1843 assumed gigantic proportions. Meetings, attended by hundreds of thousands, had assembled in different parts of the country, and the time seemed to have arrived when the Irish people would either obtain their demands, or burst forth into a violent movement. The Government of Sir Robert Peel

* Hansard, 3 S. lxxi. 842—844.

determined on a resort to force, and the measures they adopted deserve the credit of being most ingeniously calculated to drive to madness an already exasperated nation. First, language of the most insulting character was employed against the Irish people and their religion, not only by the rank and file, but even by the leaders of the party in power. Then troops were poured into the country until all Ireland had become one great barrack; and, finally, one of O'Connell's meetings was prohibited under circumstances of the greatest exasperation. Under these circumstances, Lord John Russell brought in a motion for inquiry into the state of Ireland. An important debate, which extended over several nights, ensued, and on the fourth night of the debate (February 16th) Mr. Disraéli spoke. The speech, compared with what Lord Beaconsfield had been before and has been since, is a very extraordinary one; and the inference I am inclined to draw from it is that he at this time had begun to despair of receiving anything from the Conservatives, and was contemplating the transfer of his honest services to the Liberals. His speech was certainly in direct contradiction to all the principles of Toryism which the party had up to that time professed; and, what is still more important, to all those principles of Toryism on which he himself afterwards acted when he became the Tory chief.

He denounced the "union of Church and State" as "opposed by the Irish people." *

"He wanted," he said further on, "to see a public

* *Ibid.* 3 S. lxxii. 1012-13.

man come forward and say what the Irish question was. One said it was a physical question, another a spiritual question. Now, it was the absence of the aristocracy; then the absence of railroads. It was the Pope one day; potatoes, the next. Let them consider Ireland as they would any other country similarly situated, in their closets. Then they would see a teeming population, which, with reference to the cultivated soil, was denser to the square mile than that of China—created solely by agriculture, with none of those sources of wealth which are developed with civilization, and sustained consequently upon the lowest conceivable diet, so that in case of failure they had no other means of subsistence upon which they could fall back. That dense population in extreme distress inhabited an island *where there was an Established Church which was not their Church; and a territorial aristocracy, the richest of whom lived in distant capitals. Thus they had a starving population, an absentee aristocracy, and an alien Church,* and, in addition, the weakest executive in the world." *

"That was," proceeded the orator, "the Irish question. Well, then, what would hon. gentlemen say if they were reading of a country in that position? They would say at once 'the remedy is revolution.' But the Irish could not have a revolution; and why? Because Ireland was connected with another and more powerful country. Then what was the consequence? The connexion with England thus became the cause of the present state of Ireland. If the connexion with England prevented a

* *Ibid.* 1016.

revolution, and a revolution were the only remedy England logically was in the odious position of being the cause of all the misery in Ireland. What, then, was the duty of an English Minister? To effect by his policy all those changes which a revolution would do by force. That was the Irish question in its integrity."*

The reader will by-and-by see this remarkable speech alluded to in a very remarkable manner on a memorable occasion ; and he will likewise see how Mr. Disraeli, as an official, treated this utterance of his unofficial days. For the present, let me simply point out that on all the Irish questions then so bitterly dividing the English parties Mr. Disraeli pronounces distinctly Liberal as opposed to Conservative doctrines. I have suggested that at this period Mr. Disraeli was contemplating—vaguely and indefinitely, of course—still another transformation : that, as a change in the political horizon had formerly induced him to abandon Radicalism for Conservatism, so now another change in his political prospects suggested the abandonment of the Conservative and a return to the Radical creed. By this time he had abandoned probably all hope of getting anything from Peel ; nor was there any sign at this moment of the advent of that rupture in Peel's ranks which Lord Beaconsfield afterwards employed to Peel's destruction. Probably, then, he was thinking whether he might not make his peace with the Liberals and the Liberal leader. Of this view of the intentions of this speech, I find strong confirmation in an allusion to Lord John Russell,

* *Ibid.*

the Liberal leader. The allusion is apparently casual and accidental ; but scarcely anything of a personal character that Lord Beaconsfield says, is said accidently, or without deep purpose. Behind almost every syllable that drops from Lord Beaconsfield, however carelessly, or lightly, or accidentally, whether with the appearance of calmness or with that of passion, one can see the cold brain of almost superhuman perception, working patiently, ceaselessly, remorselessly, at the problem of advancing the interests of that brain's owner.

"With regard," said Mr. Disraeli in the speech from which I have been quoting,—"With regard to the proposal of the noble lord (Lord John Russell), if the noble lord, or any other hon. member, came forward with a comprehensive plan which would certainly settle the question of Ireland, no matter what the sacrifice might be, he (Mr Disraeli) would support it, *though he might afterwards feel it necessary to retire from Parliament, or to place his seat again at the disposal of his constituency.*" *

I do not think I am putting a forced construction on this passage in suggesting that it points to an inclination on the part of Mr. Disraeli to prepare the way for another scene in his political pantomime.†

The ingenuous reader will not, I hope, raise the

* *Ibid.* 1013-14.

† In the course of the speech with which I have been just dealing, Mr. Disraeli, after he had stated that he represented "the oldest Tory constituency in the country," claimed to have already succeeded in weeding from their minds some most inveterate Whig prejudices. "Last year," he went on, "for example, when he was told that he

objection to this suggestion of an intended change in Mr. Disraeli of his allegiance from Sir Robert Peel to Lord John Russell, that he had for years previous to this inflicted on the one his most abject flattery and on the other his most virulent abuse. It is true that he had called Peel "the only hope of a suffering people," and Lord John Russell a man of "a strong ambition and a feeble intellect." It is true that he had talked

had lost his seat *because he had supported the right hon. gentleman's tariff*, he went down to see his friends in the country, and *explained the history of England to them, and he could assure the House that after that they took the most enlightened views upon the subject, and were proud to recur to old Tory principles of commerce.*" I have not quoted this passage merely to give a further example of that astonishing modesty which is one of Lord Beaconsfield's most prominent characteristics; I had the more important purpose in view of drawing attention to the speech to his constituents, of which mention is made in the passage quoted. The speech was delivered at the dinner of the Plough Club, in Shrewsbury, in May 1843. I have carefully but vainly looked for any historical information in the address; the greater part of it is mere election *blague* about our glorious principles, our territorial constitution, and so forth. One really wonders, in reading the speech, how any man could condescend to talk such rubbish. And still more one wonders how any one could be deceived by language so plainly insincere. The speech is really as much a burlesque of the oratory for Tory farmers as the speech of Serjeant Buzfuz is of the oratory of lawyers. Amid the mass of *blague*, however, we find some matter that has an interest for us; that is to say, we find a good deal about Sir Robert Peel, and about Mr. Disraeli's support of Peel's Free Trade Corn Bill and Tariff of 1842. These, Mr. Disraeli declared, he voted for as "wise and expedient measures." "I voted," he says in another passage, "that *Sir Robert Peel should do that which nearly a quarter of a century before Lord Liverpool had done, and which, nearly a quarter of a century before Lord Liverpool's time, Mr. Pitt had done.* (Hear, hear.) *Sir Robert Peel only followed the example of those eminent statesmen—of those eminent Conservative statesmen*—(cheers)"—and so on. Now here is a point I wish to draw particular attention to in this speech. Mr. Disraeli, in allusion to this address, says, as has been seen, that he had been

of Peel as one of "splendid talents" and "spotless reputation," while he had compared Russell to an "insect." But I have written to little purpose if the reader who has followed the narrative up to this point requires to be told that the recollection of all this past adulation and this past vituperation would not have had the least influence in preventing Mr. Disraeli from beginning to abuse the man whom he had praised, and to praise him whom he had abused.*

threatened with the loss of his seat because he had supported Peel's Tariff. And this is true, for the *Shropshire Conservative*, one of the journals of Shrewsbury which had formerly supported Peel most strongly, contained at this period—as I have already mentioned (*ante*, 210-11, note)—most bitter denunciations of Peel. The chief ground of these denunciations was that the Premier had, in his Tariff and Corn Act, abandoned the Protectionist principles which he had been raised to power to defend. In other words, the *Shropshire Conservative* brought against Peel the very same charge which, a few years later on, Mr. Disraeli used with such crushing effect. But mark how, on this occasion, Mr. Disraeli meets the chief article in his own and the *Shropshire Conservative's* indictment of Peel. "It would have been easy for me," said Mr. Disraeli, "as many others have done, to turn round suddenly and say, here is the Minister of England, the man whom the men of England have put at the head of the great Conservative party; he has gained power, and the moment he has gained power he seems to hesitate whether he should carry into extreme effect the principles we profess." (Hear, hear, from the Editor of the *Shropshire Conservative*.) "Hear, hear, says my hon. friend. (Cheers.) *My answer to him is this, that Sir Robert Peel is not the man to be carried into power to be your tool!* (Great cheers.) *He will be your Minister, but he will not be your tool!* (Applause.)"—*Shropshire Conservative*, May 3, 1843.

* A writer from whom I have often quoted puts in effective juxtaposition the estimates given of Lord John Russell at different periods by Lord Beaconsfield. Having first quoted the epithets applied in the Runnymede letters, the writer proceeds: "Later in Mr. Disraeli's career, it became his cue to flatter Lord Russell as resolutely as in the letters of Runnymede he had bespattered him. In 'Coningsby,' his

Among the members of the House during this session, and for some years afterwards, was a Mr. Ferrand, who sat for Knaresborough. He was a Tory of the most violent school, and was by no means friendly to the existing Tory Cabinet, whose attachment to Tory principles he considered decidedly lukewarm. He seems to have had a boisterous, restless, unreasoning nature, and he made himself principally remarkable by speeches of the most violent and reckless

'strong ambition' and 'dark and dishonourable intrigues' are converted into 'this moral intrepidity which prompts him ever to dare that which his intellect assures him is politic. He is consequently at the same time sagacious and bold in counsel; as an administrator, he is prompt and indefatigable.' The 'cold and inanimate temperament,' the 'weak voice and mincing manner,' the 'imbecile accents that struggle for sound in the chamber, echoing but a few years back with the glowing fervour of a Canning,' became 'physical deficiencies which even a Demosthenic impulse could scarcely overcome.' But these disadvantages detract little from the parliamentary influence of a statesman who 'is experienced in debate, quick in reply, fertile in resources, takes large views, and frequently compensates for a dry and hesitating manner by the expression of those noble truths that flash across the fancy, and rise spontaneously to the lips of men of poetic temperament when addressing popular assemblies.' 'The noble' of the Runnymede letters 'who, with a historic name and no fortune, a vast ambition and a baulked career, and soured, not to say malignant, from disappointment,' offered 'prime materials for the leader of a revolutionary faction,' becomes one whose 'private life of dignified repute,' and 'the antecedents of whose birth and rank,' added to the personal qualities before eulogised, made the best leader the Whigs have ever had or could have.' The 'individual' of Runnymede, 'who, on the principle that good vinegar is the corruption of bad wine, has been metamorphosed from 'an incapable author' into an eminent politician,' becomes, in the biography of Lord George Bentinck, an instance, along with Mr. Burke, 'Caius Julius,' and Frederick the Great, of the union of pre-eminent capacity, both in meditation and in action."—"*Political Adventures of Lord Beaconsfield*," *Fortnightly Review*, cxxxviii., N. S., 875-6.

personal invective. In a debate on the Corn Law, he would stand up to declare that Mr. Cobden grossly ill-treated his *employés*, and roundly call the manufacturers a set of slave-drivers. In moments of great excitement, and after dinner, his speeches received occasionally a good deal of applause from the more rabid of his party; but his sallies as a rule appear to have evoked nothing but laughter—half-amused, half-contemptuous.

But though he might thus be contemned by other people, Mr. Ferrand had the satisfaction of being taken quite seriously by Mr. Disraeli. The future enemy of Peel saw in this silly, bigoted, and tempestuous man what he himself would call "the brooding elements" of an active opposition. It is one of the secrets of Lord Beaconsfield's success in life, as I have more than once pointed out, that he has selected the proper persons to be his tools. He has built his position, as he told us he intended to do in "Vivian Grey," on the mean passions of mean and foolish men. Mr. Ferrand was an excellent specimen of the kind of Conservative who could be played off against the Conservative chief, and the whole party which Mr. Disraeli afterwards succeeded in dragging after him against Peel consisted almost entirely of men of a Ferrand-like type of mind and character. All that was good in the Conservative party adhered to Peel; all that was bad, followed the lead of Mr. Disraeli.

Mr. Ferrand, like Mr. Disraeli, was great on the Poor Law, and was fond of delivering excited harangues

to working men on the wrongs the new bastilles inflicted on the poor. Sir James Graham, then Home Secretary, had the misfortune to come into collision with the member for Knaresborough on his pet topic, and was accordingly favoured with a large amount of Mr. Ferrand's vituperation. Sir James Graham was accused by Mr. Ferrand of having induced an Assistant Poor Law Commissioner to draw up a false report, and of having also induced Mr. Hogg, then member for Beverley, to give a partial vote at an Election Petition Committee, of which he was chairman.

In making a sort of defence for Mr. Ferrand, Mr. Disraeli took an opportunity of striking a blow at the Premier. In the previous session a painful scene had taken place between the Premier and Mr. Cobden.

The terrible distress of the year 1842 produced a great deal of political discontent. As is often the case in such moods of the public mind, some of the people attributed their privations to the Government. This feeling found terrible expression: Mr. Drummond, the private secretary of Sir Robert Peel, was shot dead in the streets. Many persons thought—Peel among the rest—that the bullet was intended for the Premier himself, and that Mr. Drummond was shot in mistake. This terrible event came upon Peel at a moment when he was physically almost worn out by hard work, and by the anxiety of his overwhelming responsibility; and much disturbed his mind.

Shortly after this occurrence, Cobden, in a fervid speech on the Corn Laws,—for he, poor creature, could

not bear, with the sublime equanimity of Mr. Disraeli, the sight of the distress of the people, while the price of food was kept up artificially by law,—Cobden, I say, declared Sir Robert Peel "personally responsible" for the condition of the country. At these words, Peel, still under the influence of his secretary's tragic death, sprang from his seat, and made a heated reply, that could be interpreted as an accusation against Cobden of abetting assassination; and a scene of painful explanations followed. To this scene, with egregious bad taste, Mr. Disraeli referred, raking up the whole disagreeable story. It was in this same speech that he made the only attack I know of on Lord Derby—then Lord Stanley. Ironically complimenting Lord Stanley for his "amenity of manner" and "choice selection of conciliatory phrase," he styled him the "Prince Rupert of Parliamentary discussion; his charge is resistless, but when he returns from the pursuit, he always finds his camp in the possession of the enemy."* It was on this occasion also that he complimented Sir Robert Peel on his "historical research," and his "unrivalled memory"—an anticipation of his famous joke on Sir Robert's love of quotation.

In the session of 1845 Mr. Disraeli made no longer a secret of his enmity to Sir Robert Peel. And the time supplied him with an excellent opportunity for successfully attacking the Ministry.

Sir James Graham, as has before been stated, was Home Secretary under Sir Robert Peel. During these

* Hansard, 3 S. lxxiv. 248.

years, Mazzini was living in England, and was, as throughout his whole life, engaged in a plot for the unification of Italy. Two brothers—Bandiera by name—were among his instruments and correspondents. Their letters to Mazzini were opened by order of Sir James Graham, and the Austrian Government was informed of the plots against it which these letters revealed. The brothers Bandiera were living in Corfu. A spy, employed by the Austrian Government, induced the brothers to enter upon Austrian territory; and, having been seized, they were executed.

This event aroused most violent excitement in England, and drew down upon Sir James Graham a storm of popular hate. Popular sentiment was wounded in its most sensitive points. First, the sacredness of private correspondence was invaded; and, next, the right of asylum to which the people of this country attach such importance. The strong feeling of dislike to the existing rulers of Italy added to the indignation at the manner in which those who had conspired against them had been entrapped to a bloody end.

The excitement was increased when the rumours went abroad that it was not the letters of foreigners only which were opened by the Government. Mr. Thomas Duncombe, the then highly popular member for Finsbury, asserted that the seals of his letters also had been broken in the year 1842, when the Chartist agitation was at its height.

In February, 1845, Mr. Duncombe brought the matter before the House of Commons. The debate

was several times adjourned and several times renewed. On February 20, Mr. Disraeli spoke; and he then made the most violent attack on the Prime Minister he had yet indulged in. He described him as displaying "unusual warmth," adding that it by no means followed that the right hon. gentleman "felt it." "The right hon. baronet," he proceeded, "has too great a mind, and fills too eminent a position, ever to lose his temper; but in a popular assembly it is sometimes expedient to enact the part of the choleric gentleman. The right hon. gentleman touched the red box with emotion. I know from old experience that when one first enters the House, these exhibitions are rather alarming; and I believe that some of the younger members were much frightened; but I would advise them not to be terrified. I would tell them that the right hon. baronet will not eat them up—will not even resign; the very worst thing he will do will be to tell them to rescind a vote." *

In the midst of such a passage as this, Mr. Disraeli calmly said, "I am making no attack on the Government."

Sir Robert Peel hereupon burst forth with a "Hear, hear." The words must have been uttered in an irritating tone, and probably—whatever the tone—raised a laugh; for the contrast between Mr. Disraeli's general style and his protest was comically glaring. The interruption put Mr. Disraeli completely out of temper; or he found it expedient to pretend to be out of temper; and

* Hansard, 3 S. lxxvii. 906.

he ferociously accused Sir Robert Peel of being in correspondence with a gentleman "who had been implicated in designs against the State." "Yes!" continued Mr. Disraeli, "one of the intimate friends of the right hon. gentleman was concerned in Despard's plot, and now holds office in the right hon. baronet's administration."*

What terms can properly characterise such a charge as this? This debate was in 1845; Despard's plot was in 1802; a long way indeed to go back for an accusation! Besides, to put it mildly, was it a chivalrous mode of combat to attack a third person by way of getting at an enemy?

Sir Robert Peel's reply was overwhelming. First answering to the charge of affecting warmth, "It is certainly very possible," he said, "to manifest great vehemence of action, and yet not be in a great passion. *On the other hand, it is possible to be exceedingly cold, indifferent, and composed in your manner, and yet to cherish very acrimonious feelings.*" "Notwithstanding the provocation of the hon. gentleman," went on the Premier, "I will not deal so harshly with him as he has dealt with me. He undertakes to assure the House that my vehemence was all pretended, and warmth all simulated. *I, on the contrary, will do him entire justice; I do believe that his bitterness was not simulated, but that it was entirely sincere.*" †

And, then, referring to Mr. Disraeli's professions of

* *Ibid.* 909.

† *Ibid.* 998

friendship, Sir Robert Peel quoted the famous lines of Canning on the candid friend.*

Next the Premier dealt with the more serious question; the allegation that he had employed a gentleman connected with the Despard plot. Mr. Bonham, of the Ordnance, was the person alluded to; and Sir Robert read a letter from that gentleman, in which he stated that at the time of the plot he was a boy of sixteen years, and that he had had no more connection with it than Sir Robert Peel himself.†

This retort was crushing, and so Mr. Disraeli felt; for he had to stand up immediately after Sir Robert Peel had sat down, and make an apology which may well be called abject. His statement had been proved to be "utterly unfounded;" he had committed a "great and grievous error," "and I am not ashamed," he added, "to acknowledge it;" though most men of ordinary delicacy of feeling would have felt ashamed when convicted of having made a most serious charge, which had no foundation whatever, against an unoffending person. Mr. Disraeli's excuse for his act is still poorer in spirit:—

"I repeat, the reference was perfectly unpremeditated, and I believe it was so recognised by the House at the time. *A taunting cheer from the right hon. baronet called my recollection to the circumstance, which I admit I thought might not be agreeable to him,* but at half-past

* "Give me the avowed, erect, and manly foe;
Firm I can meet, perhaps can turn the blow;
But of all the plagues, good Heaven, thy wrath can send,
Save, O save me from a candid friend!"—*Ibid.* 998.

† Hansard, 3 S. lxxvii. 1000.

eleven o'clock, in the excitement of debate, there are perhaps few of us who would be superior to the weakness." *

With characteristic elasticity, Mr. Disraeli, notwithstanding his discomfiture of February 21, returned to the charge against the Premier on February 28. He played on a good string—the implicit obedience which Sir Robert Peel demanded from his supporters. This he denounced as "a system of tyranny" "as degrading to those who exercise it as to those who endure it." † Then, he thus happily described the adoption by Peel of Liberal measures: "*The right hon. Gentleman caught the Whigs bathing, and walked away with their clothes. He has left them in the full enjoyment of their liberal position, and he is himself a strict conservative of their garments.*‡ . . . . I look on the right hon. Gentleman as a man who has tamed the Shrew of Liberalism by her own tactics. He is the political Petruchio, who has outbid you all."§

The light tone which characterises the part of the speech just quoted was changed as Mr. Disraeli approached the conclusion of his address. The reader has seen that Sir Robert Peel quoted against Mr. Disraeli Canning's famous lines on the "candid friend." It is known that when, on Lord Liverpool's illness, Canning became Premier, Sir Robert Peel refused his support, and withdrew from the new Ministry. The feeling—whether just or unjust—was general, that Peel's conduct in this transaction was not—to say the least of it—generous. Sir Robert Peel, as has already

* *Ibid.* 1005. † *Ibid.* lxxviii. 752. ‡ *Ibid.* § *Ibid.* 54-5.

been seen, was much given to quotation, sometimes even venturing to speak long passages from the classics. With cruel dexterity Mr. Disraeli stabs his enemy in these weak points. He sarcastically complimented the Prime Minister on using quotation with great effect, "partly, because he seldom quotes a passage that has not previously received the meed of Parliamentary approbation, and partly and principally, because his quotations are so happy." * Then he went on to allude to the relations which had existed between Peel and Canning.

"We all," he said, speaking of Canning, "admire his genius; we all, at least *most of us*, deplore his untimely end; and we all sympathise with him in his fierce struggle with supreme prejudice and *sublime mediocrity*,—with inveterate foes and with—'candid friends.' The right hon. Gentleman may be sure that a quotation from such an authority will always tell. Some lines, for example, upon friendship, written by Mr. Canning, and quoted by the right hon. Gentleman! The theme—the poet—the speaker—what a felicitous combination! Its effect in debate must be overwhelming; and I am sure, were it addressed to me, all that would remain for me would be thus publicly to congratulate the right hon. Gentleman, not only on his ready memory, but on his courageous conscience." †

This bitterly pointed attack Sir Robert Peel received coolly enough. He expressed the hope that Mr. Disraeli, "having discharged the accumulated virus of the last week," now felt "more at ease than he was." ‡ Then Peel

* *Ibid.* 155. † *Ibid.* 155-6. ‡ *Ibid.* 205.

declared that he would not condescend to "reciprocate personalities" with his assailant.* Finally, referring to the attack as to his conduct towards Canning, Peel naturally asked how it was that by an accidental quotation Mr. Disraeli's mind was suddenly, and for the first time, awakened to the enormity of his conduct.†

In about three weeks after this collision, Mr. Disraeli had another and a better opportunity of assailing the Minister. Nobody watching his plan of operations can deny its skill, though, to be sure, the materials for a rebellion against the Government lay ready enough to any one's hands. Mr. Disraeli knew that the sternness of Sir Robert Peel's rule had created discontent among his followers ; and in his last two speeches Mr. Disraeli had dexterously appealed to this feeling. But even stronger than this feeling was another among a large body of the Conservatives—the feeling that Sir Robert Peel had not proved sufficiently devoted to what is called the agricultural interest. I have already shown the alarm which Sir Robert Peel's Corn Law and Tariff of 1842 had created. This alarm had gone on increasing. Sir Robert Peel, in 1842, had but entered office, and while his followers were still enjoying the first delicious taste of power, they were willing to be carried away by their leader. But 1842 was now three years past. And then, Sir Robert's declarations in favour of Protection were becoming every year less firm. Besides,

* *Ibid.* 206.

† Hansard, 3 S. lxxviii. 207-8.

the great relief that the agriculturists had panted for had come in mere drops, not in golden showers.

When Mr. W. Miles then proposed, on March 17th, that a portion of the surplus should be applied towards "affording relief to the agricultural interest,"* Mr. Disraeli had a splendid opportunity for an attack on Sir Robert Peel, and most effectively he made use of it.† Knowing well that the Government would oppose this motion of Mr. Miles, Mr. Disraeli recalled how several of the Ministers had supported a similar proposal when they were out of office ; and then he harped on the difference between the Government, and particularly Sir Robert Peel, when they were in and out of office. Next he ironically rebuked his agricultural friends for their impatience with Sir Robert Peel. "There is no doubt," he went on, "a difference in the right hon. gentleman's demeanour as leader of the Opposition and as Minister of the Crown. But that's the old story : *you must not contrast too strongly the hours of courtship with the years of possession.* 'Tis very true that the right hon. gentleman's conduct is different. I remember him making his protection speeches. They were the best speeches I ever heard. It was a great thing to hear the right hon. gentleman say, 'I would sooner be the leader of the Gentlemen of England than possess the confidence of Sovereigns.' That was a grand thing. We don't hear much of the 'Gentlemen of England' now. But what of that? They have the pleasures of memory—the charms of reminiscences. They were his first love, and

* *Ibid.* lxxviii. 963. † *Ibid.* 1027-28.

though he may not kneel to them now as in the hour of passion, still they can recall the past; and nothing is more useless and unwise than these scenes of crimination and reproach, for we know that in all these cases, when the beloved object has ceased to charm, it is in vain to appeal to the feelings."*

Mr. Disraeli next proceeded to allude to a speech which Mr. Sydney Herbert had made a few days previously. Mr. Herbert had said that "it would be distasteful to the agriculturist to come whining to Parliament at every period of temporary distress." †

"The right hon. gentleman," said Mr. Disraeli, "being compelled to interfere, sends down his valet, who says in the genteelest manner, 'We can have no whining here.' And that, sir, is exactly the case of the great agricultural interest—that beauty which everybody wooed, and one deluded. There is a fatality in such charms, and we now seem to approach the catastrophe of her career. Protection appears to be in about the same condition that Protestantism was in 1828. For my part, if we are to have free trade, I who honour genius, prefer that such measures should be proposed by the hon. Member for Stockport, than by one who, through skilful Parliamentary manœuvres, has tampered with the generous confidence of a great people and a great party. For myself, I care not what may be the result. Dissolve, if you please, the Parliament you have betrayed, and appeal to the people, who, I believe, mistrust you. For me there remains

* *Ibid.* 1027-28. † *Ibid.* 818.

this at least—the opportunity of expressing thus publicly my belief that *a Conservative Government is an Organised Hypocrisy.*" *

In our admiration of the skill of these attacks by Mr. Disraeli, we must not forget to examine their justice or injustice. I have already, in the earlier part of this chapter, shown—as I think, conclusively—that the Corn Law and the Tariff of 1842 were Free Trade measures; and I have shown that those very Free Trade measures were not only not opposed, but were actually supported with enthusiasm, by Mr. Disraeli. Yet he now has the face in 1845 to pander to the prejudice of the Tory agriculturists against those measures of Sir Robert Peel, which he himself supported in 1842! Sir Robert Peel's reply—so far as the contest between him and Mr. Disraeli is concerned—is crushing. † He quoted the passages I have already given, in which Mr. Disraeli declared that the Tariff of 1842, which at that time was denounced by the same persons and for the same reasons as Peel's measures at the present moment, was in exact permanent and perfect consistency with the principles of Free Trade laid down by Mr. Pitt. Having thus completely proved the inconsistency of Mr. Disraeli—the readiness to defend in 1842, and the readiness to attack in 1845, the same measures,—Sir Robert Peel thus contemptuously proceeds :—

"I do not know whether they"—Mr. Disraeli's words—"are of sufficient importance to mention them to the House; but this I know, that I then held in the

* *Ibid.* 1028. † *Ibid.* 1038.

same estimation the panegyric with which I now regard the attack."*

We have seen how Mr. Disraeli skilfully addressed himself towards encouraging the wrath of the different sections of the Tory party which Sir Robert Peel had offended. He had appealed to the vanity of the younger members, whose frowardness Sir Robert Peel had snubbed. He had appealed to the agriculturists, whom Sir Robert Peel had disappointed. But those feelings, bitter and powerful though they might be, were weak compared with that to which Mr. Disraeli next appealed; for the passion upon which he played was religious bigotry. In 1845 Sir Robert Peel proposed to increase the annual allowance to the Roman Catholic College of Maynooth from £9,000 to £26,000. This grant was justified by all the circumstances. It had been conclusively proved that the College was quite inefficient for its purposes; that it could not teach the requisite number of students; and that it could not properly feed and house the few students it had. Moreover, the grant raised no question of principle, for if it were wrong to endow the Roman Catholics at all, a grant of £9,000 a year was quite as much a violation of that principle as a grant of £26,000. But the violation of principle involved in a grant of £9,000 had been sanctioned by successive Parliaments for fifty years. The proposal of Sir Robert Peel was accordingly supported by all the intelligent and tolerant men of the House, irrespective of party. It was supported by Lord

* *Ibid.*

John Russell, the leader of the Liberal party, by a Radical so sturdy as Joseph Hume, and by an enemy so bitter of religious endowment as Richard Cobden. However, a measure which had the appearance of even giving the slightest support to the Roman Catholic religion was certain to find vehement opposition from a section of narrow-minded and bigoted people. As Macaulay, who spoke strongly in favour of the Bill, said, describing the commotion which Peel's proposal drew forth,—

"The Orangeman raises his howl, and Exeter Hall sets up its bray, and Mr. M'Neile is horror-stricken to think that a still larger grant is intended for 'the priests of Baal' at the table of 'Jezebel'; and your Protestant operatives of Dublin call for the impeachment of the Minister in exceedingly bad English." *

Mr. Disraeli, for all his indifference to the Christian religion in any shape, saw a tide was flowing against the Minister; and, however dirty the tide might be, determined to take it at its flood.

In the character of Lord Bolingbroke, the statesman for whom Lord Beaconsfield has so often expressed admiration, one of the worst features is that, though personally an infidel, he assiduously persecuted Dissenters. Every historian feels bound to express disgust at this, as one of the worst offences in his scandalous career. Yet why should we waste our anger on Bolingbroke? Bolingbroke is long since dead; but we have living

* *Ibid.* lxxix. 657.

among us, and influencing our destinies, a statesman who has made quite as unscrupulous a use of religious infatuation.

One of Mr. Disraeli's first points against Sir Robert Peel was the pains that that statesman took to justify his actual policy by reference to past examples.

"The right hon. gentleman," said Mr. Disraeli, "tells us to go back to precedents; with him a great measure is always founded on a small precedent. He traces the steam engine always back to the tea-kettle. His precedents are generally tea-kettle precedents."*

"It is not Radicalism," said Mr. Disraeli in another passage, "it is not the revolutionary spirit of the nineteenth century, which has consigned 'another place' to illustrious insignificance; it is Conservatism and a Conservative dictator."†

And then, again, he aired the grievances of young members:—

"Whenever the young men of England allude to any great principle of political life or Parliamentary conduct, are they to be recommended to go to a railway Committee?"‡

And next followed this famous description of Peel's statesmanship:—

"Something has risen up in this country as fatal in the political world as it has been in the landed world of Ireland—we have a great Parliamentary middleman. It is well known what a middleman is; he is a man

* *Ibid.* 558. † *Ibid.* ‡ *Ibid.* 564.

who bamboozles one party, and plunders the other, till, having obtained a position to which he is not entitled, he cries out, 'Let us have no party questions, but fixity of tenure.'" *

After this came an appeal to the Roman Catholic members to vote against the Bill. And this passage appears to me one of the most powerful Mr. Disraeli ever uttered. One figure is unquestionably fine :—

"I cannot believe, therefore," said Mr. Disraeli, "that the Roman Catholic gentlemen, on reflection—and I hope they will have time for reflection—will vote for this measure, when they consider what it is. Who is he who introduces it? He is the same individual *whose bleak shade fell on the sunshine of your hopes for more than a quarter of a century.*" †

Finally, in his anxiety to get support against the Minister, Mr. Disraeli appealed to those Whigs whom he had been savagely abusing almost from his boyhood, and to that Whig statesman whom he had once compared to an insect.

"As to the Whigs, I am almost in despair," he said, "of appealing to their hereditary duties, their constitutional convictions, or their historical position; but I should have thought that the noble Lord opposite was almost weary of being dragged at the triumphal car of a conqueror who did not conquer him in fair fight. I think the noble Lord might have found some inspiration in the writings of that great man whom he has so often quoted, and whose fame he attempts to

* *Ibid.* 565-6. † *Ibid.* 567.

emulate. I should have thought that a man of the mind and spirit of the noble Lord—and he has a thoughtful mind and a noble spirit—might have felt that Mr. Fox would have taken a course which I still think the noble Lord, touched by his high position, and the responsibility of that position, will still adopt."*

And the speech wound up with these energetic passages :—

"Let us in this House re-echo that which I believe to be the sovereign sentiment of this country ; let us tell persons in high places that cunning is not caution, and that habitual perfidy is not high policy of State. . . . . Let us bring back to this House that which it has for so long a time past been without—the legitimate influence and salutary check of a constitutional Opposition. That is what the country requires, what the country looks for. Let us do it at once in the only way in which it can be done, by dethroning this dynasty of deception, by putting an end to the intolerable yoke of official despotism and Parliamentary imposture."†

I have now finished my account of the session of 1845. No impartial reader, it appears to me, can think that Mr. Disraeli comes well out of it, or Sir Robert Peel ill. In the chief debate of the year—the debate on the Maynooth Grant—we find Mr. Disraeli taking the side of the bigoted and the stupid, and Sir Robert Peel that of the tolerant and the enlightened. We have seen that, to further his private interests, Mr.

* *Ibid.* 568. † *Ibid.* 568-9.

Disraeli appealed to the worst passions of the narrow-minded ; while, to carry what he believed a good measure, Sir Robert Peel dared to encounter violent prejudices, and to risk his personal and political interests. We now approach a session in which Mr. Disraeli and Sir Robert Peel play the same parts on a more important scale.

CHAPTER XI.

THE FALL OF PEEL.

I HAVE, in the last and previous chapters, endeavoured to show the change that was gradually working in the mind of Sir Robert Peel on the question of Protection. The Corn Law and the Tariff of 1842 were a real advance in the direction of Free Trade; and the speeches of the Premier in the succeeding sessions prove that the Premier's defence of Protection was growing perceptibly weaker. During the recess of 1845, events occurred which brought a crisis to Sir Robert Peel, and rendered all further hesitation and wavering on his part impossible. The blight attacked the potato in Ireland, and famine stared the Irish people in the face. The appalling statement rested first on newspaper reports, but by-and-by public meetings, under the most responsible auspices, confirmed the intelligence. Everybody now knows that those gloomy prognostications were more than realized, and that Ireland passed through one of the most fearful famines known in history.

This terrible problem then—the Irish people deprived

of their staple article of food and threatened with wholesale starvation—confronted Sir Robert Peel. What possible solution could present itself to his mind but the admission of corn free of duty? This also was the remedy suggested by the Duke of Leinster and other Irishmen of authority. Moreover, the accounts of the condition of England were also alarming.

In addition to considering the condition of the two countries, we also must regard the state of political parties.

The Anti-Corn Law League had reached gigantic proportions, and overwhelming influence. The funds raised for its purposes were enormous; its meetings, held all over the country, and at regular periods in the metropolis, became daily more crowded and more enthusiastic; the country was stirred by most eloquent political speakers,—by the poetic fervour of W. J. Fox, the passion of Bright, and the resistless common sense of Cobden. Such was the position of the League. The attitude of the Whigs was no less decided. On the 22nd November Lord John Russell addressed a letter to the electors of the City of London, denouncing the existing Corn Law as "the blight of commerce and the bane of agriculture." This justified the conclusion that the Whigs were prepared to unite with the Anti-Corn Law League in demanding the total repeal of the Corn Laws.

These, then, were the circumstances Peel had to face: famine threatened Ireland; the Anti-Corn Law

League had become irresistible; the Whigs were ready to carry absolute Free Trade; and he himself had lost the last shread of his long-waning faith in the benefits of Protection.

I now approach the difficult and much-controverted question—What was the Minister's duty in this position? I have already stated my views on ministerial and party obligations.* I laid it down as a general principle that a Tory Minister ought to leave to a Liberal Ministry the carriage of Liberal measures, and *vice versâ*. There may be circumstances, however, which justify a departure from this general rule. Were there such circumstances in the case of Sir Robert Peel in 1845?

There was a considerable difference, unquestionably, between the views of Peel and of Lord John Russell on the question of Free Trade and Protection; but the difference was one of degree rather than of principle. There was almost as great a gulf between the views of Lord John Russell—up to 1845—and of Mr. Cobden, as between those of Sir Robert Peel and of Lord John Russell. In 1842, the proposals of Lord Russell and of Peel did not represent the antagonism of Free Trade and Protection. The plan of Sir Robert Peel, as had been mentioned, was a duty regulated by a sliding-scale. The counter-proposal of Lord John Russell was a fixed duty of 8*s*. Even assuming that Lord John Russell's scheme would have resulted in cheaper corn, his scheme is not the

*See *ante*, 124-5.

scheme of a Free Trader any more than that of Sir Robert Peel. The Free Trader is opposed to any duty whatever, and therefore is equally hostile to a duty, whether it be a fixed one of 8*s*., like that of Lord John Russell, or a variable one, like that of Sir Robert Peel. But it is by no means clear that the plan of Sir Robert Peel made imported corn dearer than it would have been under the plan of Lord John Russell. In the opinion of many Liberal journals of the period, imported corn would be actually cheaper under the sliding-scale than under the fixed duty. And if that be so, Sir Robert Peel's plan was not only in principle no more removed than Lord John Russell's from the plan of a Free Trader, but was nearer to it in practice.

Moreover—to show still further that Lord John Russell was nearly, if not quite, as removed from the Free Traders as Sir Robert Peel—when Mr. Villiers brought forward his annual motion in favour of absolute Free Trade, Lord John Russell voted against it quite as persistently, up to 1845, as Sir Robert Peel. So far, then, as the personal claim to carry Free Trade is concerned, I think that that of Sir Robert Peel was equal to that of Lord John Russell.

The next question is, Did Peel's party position permit him to propose Free Trade? And was there any difference between his position with regard to Free Trade, as a party leader, and that of Lord John Russell? Did the position of Lord John Russell, as a party leader, give him a claim—apart from his

personal claim—to pass Free Trade, which Sir Robert Peel had not?

On all these questions, I think the answer must be decidedly *against* Sir Robert Peel. Whatever were Sir Robert Peel's own opinions, he was the chief of the distinctly Protectionist party. It is nothing to the purpose that he had kept himself comparatively unpledged in favour of Protection. What the constituencies, in returning a supporter of Sir Robert Peel, meant to return, was a supporter of Protection. On the other hand, a large body—what may be called the extreme left—of Lord John Russell's followers were Free Traders, and Lord John Russell's position, as the leader of this body of Liberals, plainly signified that he was the leader of a party which, to say the least, was not distinctly Protectionist. It, therefore, appears to me that, so far as the position of the two rivals as party leaders is concerned, Lord John Russell had, and Sir Robert had *not*, a right to pass Free Trade.

But another consideration here steps in. There are circumstances in which the obligations of a statesman to his country may overrule his obligations to his party. A crisis may come which requires immediate action, and a particular Minister may be the only man capable of applying that imperatively demanded action with the requisite promptitude and completeness. In such circumstances, a Minister would, in my opinion, be justified in adopting the measures absolutely required by the country, though he and his party might have been opposed to those measures at another time.

Let us apply these considerations to the circumstances of Sir Robert Peel in 1845. It can scarcely be denied that a crisis had come to the country, and that the crisis demanded immediate treatment. If the prospect of the majority of a population in one county being starved, and a large number of the population in another being half-starved, be not a crisis that demands a prompt remedy, what imaginable circumstances can constitute such a crisis?

Well, then, a crisis, a terrible crisis, having come to the country, was Sir Robert Peel justified in assuming that he was the man to deal with it? Firstly, he was the Prime Minister, and, as such, was, for the time being, the person chiefly responsible for the condition of the country. The Opposition leader could, of course, be sent for, but Peel had already acquired the knowledge which the Opposition leader had yet to learn: he had a Government formed, colleagues who had worked with him for years; the Opposition leader had yet his Government to create, had yet to find colleagues who would agree with him and with each other. All these things must cause delay in the application of a remedy by the leader of the Opposition. Meantime, there was the threatened famine crying for immediate relief.

But when we speak of Sir Robert Peel as Prime Minister in 1845, and, by virtue of this office, as primarily responsible for the condition of the country, we give but a faint notion of his responsibility. In point of fact, Sir Robert Peel was the dictator rather

than the Prime Minister of England, from 1842 to 1845. Apart from the fact that he had a majority of ninety, his personal influence was commanding.

He found almost as unvarying support from the Liberals as from the Tories ; and, indeed, whenever the more fanatical of his own supporters deserted him, Liberal speakers and voters were ready to come to his rescue. Nor was this all: the Liberal members not only supported Peel against his own followers, but even against their own leader ; and speech after speech can be quoted from the addresses of those times to prove that Liberal members founded higher hopes on Sir Robert Peel than on Lord John Russell.

Under such circumstances, it was not unnatural that Sir Robert Peel should have come to look upon himself as something more than a party leader, as something more than a Tory chief : it is not surprising that he should have come to consider himself, as others considered him, Minister of the country.*

If, then, Sir Robert Peel were the Minister of the country, it was his plain duty to consult its interests, even at the sacrifice of the interests of his party.

Taking this view of his position, Sir Robert Peel proposed to the members of his Cabinet that the ports should be opened for the importation of corn to the

* Mr. Cobden thus described the position of Peel at this crisis: "There is," he said, "no man in the world, whether he be the Grand Turk, or whether he be a Russian despot, who has more power than Sir Robert Peel now has in this country. He has the power, and I say he is a criminal and a poltroon if he hesitates a whit."—*Ashworth, Cobden and the League*, 301.

starving population of Ireland. This was no new expedient; but in the circumstances of this time everybody felt that the ports, if once opened, could never be closed again. And, therefore, the proposal of Sir Robert Peel was interpreted to mean the complete abandonment of Protection, and the adoption of absolute Free Trade. Several of Peel's colleagues refused to accept his proposals; and, having a divided Cabinet, he had no choice but to offer his resignation. Lord John Russell was sent for; but failing in his efforts to form a Ministry, Peel was again called to power; and having got rid of the colleagues—Lord Derby, then Lord Stanley, among the rest—who would not support him, prepared his plans for introducing Free Trade.

It is needless to say that Peel's determination to carry Free Trade supplied a very effective weapon to his enemies; and that his enemy-in-chief did not hesitate to use the weapon to the utmost.

The Protectionists all over the country called meetings to protest against what they called the treachery of Peel; and speeches were made which would now excite a smile, but for the tragic circumstances under which they were delivered.

Two Dukes, their Graces of Richmond and Buckingham, put themselves at the head of the movement against Peel. His Grace of Richmond seems to have been one of the most insolent and stupid even of his name or order, and his invectives had something to do in steeling the determination and rousing the angry pride of Sir Robert Peel.

In Parliament, as the reader will have already seen, there was, even at the close of 1845, a pretty large minority of malcontents on the Conservative benches. There were the fanatical Protestants whom Sir Robert Peel had offended by his small pecuniary addition to the Maynooth Grant; and there were the fanatical Protectionists whom his gradual advances towards Free Trade had estranged. And, besides, there was the great fact that Sir Robert Peel had held almost unbounded power for four years. The times were ripe for Mr. Disraeli.

Parliament was opened on January 22, 1846. The address in reply to the Queen's speech was proposed by Lord Francis Egerton, and seconded by Mr. Beckett Denison, both converted Protectionists; and when they had concluded, Sir Robert Peel rose, and entered into lengthy explanations of the break-up and subsequent reassembling of his Cabinet in November and December of the previous year. After Sir Robert Peel had sat down, Lord John Russell got up, and gave *his* version of his futile attempts to form a Government. "When the noble lord concluded," writes Mr. Disraeli, "the House, which during the evening had rarely been excited, was tame and dispirited. . . . . It seemed that the curtain was about to fall, and certainly not to the disadvantage of the Government. In their position, the first night of the session passed in serenity was comparatively a triumph. With the elements of opposition, however considerable, so inert and desponding, the first night might give the cue to the country. Perceiving

this, a member who, though on the Tory benches, had been for two sessions in opposition to the Minister, ventured to rise and attack the Minister." *

This member is, of course, Mr. Disraeli. He began dexterously enough in a modest and deprecatory tone: "After the announcement of the right hon. Gentleman that an early day was to be appointed for the discussion of that question, I should have abstained," he said, "from intruding myself on the House at the present moment, had it not been for the peculiar tone of the right hon. Gentleman. I think that tone ought not to pass unnoticed. At the same time I do not wish to conceal my opinions on the general subject. I am not one of the converts." †

And then comes a skilful bit of self-pity and self-praise. "I am," said Mr. Disraeli, "perhaps, a member of a fallen party." ‡ This sentence, which, we doubt not, Mr. Disraeli managed to utter in a very dolorous tone of voice, must have had a fine effect on the susceptible bosoms of the squires whom Sir Robert Peel had deserted. And then, too, what a picturesquely melancholy attitude it places Mr. Disraeli himself in. The Prime Minister of the country and his colleagues had basely deserted principle. This sad example had been followed by many of their supporters—it might even be by all their supporters. Yet here was Mr. Disraeli ready to stand alone in the isolation of solitary virtue.

* "Lord George Bentinck: a Political Biography;" 2nd edition, pp. 55-6.

† Hansard, 3 S. lxxxiii. 111-12.

‡ *Ibid.* 112.

It is a very pretty picture indeed; but let us see how far it is true to fact.

"To the opinions," goes on Mr. Disraeli, "which I have expressed in this House in favour of Protection, I adhere. They sent me to this House, and if I had relinquished them I should have relinquished my seat also."*

"To the opinions which I have expressed in favour of Protection." What opinions? When expressed? I have given the reader an opportunity of reading Mr Disraeli's expressions of opinion on Protection. I have shown that, in place of displaying an obstinate and chivalric fidelity to Protection, he had shown himself quite ready to advocate Free Trade. But that was in the days when Sir Robert Peel had first come into power, might still be useful, and had proposed Free Trade measures which a powerless Protectionist minority had attacked. Now there was nothing to be gained from Sir Robert Peel; and the Protectionists promised to be a numerous and powerful section. Hence Mr. Disraeli swallows his Free Trade ideas of 1842, and boldly proclaims that he has ever been faithful to Protection.

Nor is this the only flagrant instance of false suggestion in the sentences I have quoted. To the declaration—the untrue declaration—that he himself had been in favour of Protectionist principles in 1841, he adds the further declaration that his constituency had chosen him at the General Election of that year, because of those

* *Ibid.*

Protectionist principles. But this is a representation of the election of 1841 utterly at variance with that which Mr. Disraeli gave of it on a previous occasion. The reader will, perhaps, remember that, when describing the first speech of Mr. Disraeli in the newly elected Parliament, I drew particular attention to what he said as to the elections then just concluded. I pointed out that Mr. Disraeli distinctly denied that the question of Free Trade as against Protection was the issue on which the constituencies had pronounced against the Whigs and Lord Melbourne, and in favour of Peel and the Tories. He asserted over and over again that the verdict of the constituencies was not that Protection should be maintained, but that Free Trade measures could be carried more efficiently by a Peel than by a Melbourne administration.*

Thus the picture of the '41 election given by Mr. Disraeli in 1841 is diametrically opposite to that given of it in the passage of the speech in 1846 just cited.

After these preliminaries, Mr. Disraeli gave, in his happiest style, an illustration of the position of the Premier. "Sir," he said, "there is a difficulty in finding a parallel to the position of the right hon. Gentleman in any part of history. The only parallel which I can find is an incident in the late war in the Levant, which was terminated by the policy of the noble Lord opposite. I remember when that great struggle was taking place, when the existence of the Turkish empire was at stake, the late Sultan, a man of great

* See *ante*, 204-5.

energy and fertile in resources, was determined to fit out an immense fleet to maintain his empire. Accordingly a vast armament was collected. It consisted of many of the finest ships that were ever built. The crews were picked men, the officers were the ablest that could be found, and both officers and men were rewarded before they fought. There never was an armament which left the Dardanelles similarly appointed since the day of Solyman the Great. The Sultan personally witnessed the departure of the fleet; all the muftis prayed for the success of the expedition, as all the muftis here prayed for the success of the last general election. Away went the fleet; but what was the Sultan's consternation when the lord high admiral steered at once into the enemy's port! Now, sir, the lord high admiral, on that occasion, was very much misrepresented. He, too, was called a traitor; and he, too, vindicated himself. 'True it is,' said he, 'I did place myself at the head of this valiant armada—true it is that my sovereign embraced me—true it is that all the muftis in the empire offered up prayers for my success; but I have an objection to war; I see no use in prolonging the struggle, and the only reason I had for accepting the command was that I might terminate the contest by betraying my master.' And, sir, these reasons offered by a man of great plausibility, of vast adroitness, have had their effect, for—you may be surprised at it—but I assure you it is a fact, which by the way the gallant officer opposite (Commodore Napier) can testify, that he is at this moment the First Lord

of the Admiralty at Constantinople, under the new reign." *

Next, Mr. Disraeli drew an effective picture of the allegiance his party had given to Sir Robert Peel—a very apt plan to excite disgust at the Premier's supposed desertion of his party. "Well do we remember," said Mr. Disraeli, "on this side of the House—*perhaps not without a blush*—well do we remember the efforts which we made to raise him to the bench on which he now sits. Who does not remember the 'Sacred cause of Protection,' the cause for which Sovereigns were thwarted—Parliaments dissolved—and a nation taken in!" †

This is the truest sentence in the whole speech; and one might, indeed, imagine that Mr. Disraeli was for once in his life really frank and ready to make a general confession of his sins. He certainly had a right to "blush" for his former slavish flattery of the man he was now attacking so bitterly.

He then describes Sir Robert Peel as "a man who never originates an idea—a watcher of the atmosphere." "Such a person," he added, "may be a powerful Minister, but he *is no more a great statesman than the man who gets up behind a carriage is a great whip.*" ‡

It will have been observed that many of Mr. Disraeli's attacks on Sir Robert Peel are founded on the most frivolous bases. I have already given in full a scene where Mr. Disraeli accused the Premier of being the

* *Ibid.* 113-14. † *Ibid.* 115. ‡ *Ibid.* 116.

friend and patron of a man who had been engaged in a plot for the massacre of the citizens of London, and the assassination of the king. It has been seen that this charge was utterly without foundation ; and it has also been seen that the miserable excuse Mr. Disraeli had to advance for the flagrant offence of bringing this completely unfounded charge, was that he had been irritated by a taunting cheer from the Premier, and that he wanted to say something disagreeable in return. I think I am justified in saying that—in prize-ring phraseology—this was hitting below the belt.

But Mr. Disraeli's conduct during the session of 1845 was fair play itself in comparison with his conduct during the session I am now describing. It will be found that the most innocent and accidental phrases of Sir Robert Peel are tortured by Mr. Disraeli into intentional insults of the Tory party ; that references are made to painful transactions of the past from all mention of which a delicate-minded man would recoil ; that, in fact, there is no misrepresentation, no calumny, no rhetorical trick, from which the assailant of Peel feels bound to shrink.

I am about to give the first instance of gross and plainly wilful misrepresentation. In the course of his speech, Sir Robert Peel had used the expression it was "no easy task to ensure the united action of an ancient monarchy, a proud aristocracy, and a reformed constituency." *

This appears to me one of the most innocent sen-

* *Ibid.* 94.

tences ever spoken by an orator. Everybody knows—it is a platitude of English politics, that the functions and prerogatives of the English Crown, and of the different Houses of Parliament, are ill-defined, if not undefinable. It is known to everybody that each of those parts of the Constitution has powers in theory which could not be put into force without producing collision; and that it is only by compromise, by suspension in action of purely logical claims, that the different parts of the Constitution are able to work harmoniously. Clearly, then, an English Minister has the task of reconciling by tact and good management the theoretically irreconcilable claims of the English Crown, the English House of Lords, and the English House of Commons. Is not that plainly what Sir Robert Peel's sentence was meant to convey?—and that the duty became the more difficult because of the antiquity of the first, the pride of the second, and the popular character of the third? Mark the dishonest use to which Mr. Disraeli put Peel's sentence:—

"The Minister," writes Mr. Disraeli, chuckling over his mean triumph years after, "perhaps too contemptuous of his opponents, had not guarded all his approaches. His depreciation of those party ties by which he had risen, in an assembly, too, in which they are wisely reverenced; . . . . and above all *his significant intimation that an ancient monarchy and a proud aristocracy might not be compatible with a reformed house of commons*—at least, unless he were Minister

—offered some materials in the handling of which the least adroit could scarcely fail." *

I think it requires no further argument to show that Mr. Disraeli puts a forced—more, a plainly false interpretation on Sir Robert Peel's words. As he does this, writing in coolness, years after the event, we are not surprised to find him making the same misrepresentation in a speech to an excited assembly. Here are his words :—

"Follow him!—Who is to follow him, or why is anybody to follow him—or where is anybody to follow him to? What does he mean to do—this great statesman, who talks with a *sneer* of an 'ancient monarchy' and a 'proud aristocracy,' and the difficulty of reconciling them with a reformed constituency; and who tells us that we are but drags on the wheel, and that he is the only driver? Have we arrived at that? Is that the opinion of the majority of this House, or even of the minority—of the majority of the country, or even of the minority? *Is it their opinion that ancient monarchies and proud aristocracies are inconvenient lumber, to be got rid of on the first convenient opportunity —that they are things irreconcilable with a reformed constituency,* reformed under this Minister's own protest, in spite of his own protest, this man who comes forward and tells us he is devoting himself to his country, and sacrificing himself to his Sovereign, and that he is the only man who can advise you what counsel it is most expedient for you to pursue?" †

* "Life of Bentinck," 56-7; edition of 1852.

† See *ante*, 116-17; Hansard, 3 S. lxxxiii.

The speech closes with a highly virtuous eulogy on the merits of consistency, and a severe homily on the vice of political insincerity.

"*Let men stand*," exclaimed Mr. Disraeli, "*by the principle by which they rise—right or wrong. I make no exception.* If they be in the wrong, they must retire to that shade of private life with which our present rulers have often threatened us. . . . . Do not, then, because you see a great personage giving up his opinions, do not cheer him on—*do not yield so ready a reward to political tergiversation.* Above all, maintain the line of demarcation between parties; for it is only by maintaining the independence of party that you can maintain the integrity of public men, and the power and influence of Parliament itself." *

"The opportune," says Mr. Disraeli, criticizing afterwards his own speech, "in a popular assembly, has sometimes more success than the weightiest efforts of research and reason." †

Mr. Disraeli, the reader will perceive, attributes the success of his speech rather to the passions of his audience than to the merit of what he said. And assuredly the success of such an address is one of the most amusing, or, otherwise regarded, one of the most saddening episodes in political history. Mark first the *dramatis personæ*. Here we have on one side a Minister engaged in the great task of making food accessible to the poor of three nations. This Minister is denounced for inconsistency, amid the deafening

* See *ante*, 122-3. † "Life of Bentinck," 56.

cheers of an English Parliament, by a man whose whole life had been a series of the most notorious inconsistencies. "Do not yield so ready a reward to political tergiversation," says Mr. Disraeli, who had, as everybody in the House of Commons knew, sought election first as a Radical, and a short time after as a Tory; who had first advocated and then opposed Triennial Parliaments and Vote by Ballot; who had first condemned and afterwards defended the Irish Tithes and the Irish Church; who had first sought the aid of O'Connell and of Hume, and had afterwards denounced them; who had advocated Free Trade in 1841 and 1842 as vehemently as he now advocated Protection; who had for years fawned upon the man whom he was then endeavouring to hunt for ever from power. Of whom are we to think more meanly—of Mr. Disraeli, or of the large-acred and small-brained fanatics by whom he was cheered?

On Tuesday, January 27, Sir Robert Peel introduced his Bill on the Corn Laws, the nature of which may be briefly described as a proposal for the total abolition of those laws.

A desultory conversation, but no discussion, took place on the first night, and a fortnight was to elapse before the real debate began. In that fortnight the position of Mr. Disraeli was greatly changed: from being a mere free-lance, he had become one of the chiefs of a compact party.

The leader of the Protectionist opposition was, as everybody knows, Lord George Bentinck. It was

a strange choice; but it turned out to be wiser than was at first thought. Lord George had sat in eight Parliaments without making any mark, or taking any particular interest in its proceedings. All his time and energy had been devoted to hunting and racing. He was without much talent, had little ambition, and was a wretched speaker; as a rule, he was unselfish, and he was a firm friend. Besides all this, he was rich and noble. Such a man, properly handled, would be a real Marquess of Carabas to our Vivian Grey.

The debate on the Corn Law dragged its weary length along; Protectionist member after member rose to repeat well-worn fallacies, or to give dreary echoes of Mr. Disraeli's attacks on Sir Robert Peel.* It was not till February 20 that Mr. Disraeli himself spoke.

Mr. Disraeli began by a definition of party obligations. He maintained that party is public opinion embodied; that Sir Robert Peel received office as the representative of that section of public opinion which opposes Free Trade; and that, therefore, it was not his province, but that of Lord John Russell and the Liberal party, to carry Free Trade.

The theories he laid down on party obligations will find general acceptance; but they are in direct contra-

* Those dull and stupid speeches receive obsequious eulogisms from Mr. Disraeli, who, when writing the Life of Bentinck, was not yet secure in his leadership of the country party. Mr. Philip Miles "delivered a well-digested speech."—*Life of Bentinck*, 82-3. Sir William Heathcote's speech was one "of admirable ability," "alike remarkable for its just, temperate, and ingenious views, and its graceful rhetoric and flowing elocution."—*Ibid.* 83. Mr. Stafford "replied

diction with the acts of Mr. Disraeli when he himself was a holder of office. Like Sir Robert Peel, he had to "educate" his party into a desertion of their principles. As Sir Robert Peel abandoned Protection to carry Free Trade, Mr. Disraeli abandoned opposition to any change in the franchise to carry Household Suffrage. Aye, more than this—as will soon be seen—Mr. Disraeli, when he became one of the leaders of a Protectionist Ministry, surrendered Protection quite as readily and submissively as did the man he was attacking in this speech.

Besides, Mr. Disraeli has not only practised, but preached, a gospel of party obligations in exact contradiction to that he is laying down in 1846, and in exact accordance with the theories and acts of Sir Robert Peel. The reader will not forget that in his "Vindication" he declared that Sir Robert Peel had a perfect right to bring forward in 1834, as Minister, measures which he had opposed when in opposition. He laughs to scorn the "famous dilemma of insincerity or apostacy." "I will grant," he writes, "that Sir Robert Peel and his colleagues had previously resisted the measures which they then proposed;" but he justifies this abandonment of principle on the ground that, if such measures had not been carried, Peel and his party could never again exercise power; they would have "conceded to the

to the Secretary of War in a speech of uncommon spirit and success." —*Ibid.* 85. The Marquis of Granby "proved to the House that he had carefully and deeply studied the question under discussion, and gave an earnest of that prominence in debate which he has subsequently achieved and sustained."—*Ibid.* 85; etc., etc., etc.

Whigs a monopoly of power under the specious title of a monopoly of reform."*

This is exactly the argument Sir Robert Peel, and still more, the Duke of Wellington, gave for carrying Free Trade in 1846. Free Trade, they argued, is inevitable: the Whigs have, through their leader, declared their determination to carry it. The question for us then is, whether we or they shall carry Free Trade? Are we to concede "to the Whigs a monopoly of power under the specious title of" Free Trade? If the Mr. Disraeli of 1846 had been consistent with the Mr. Disraeli of 1835, he would have most highly applauded the conclusions of Sir Robert Peel and his colleagues. In place of meeting them with the "famous dilemma of insincerity or apostacy," he should have been gratified by their practice of his own preaching.†

Mr. Disraeli next spoke on February 27, taking a very discreditable part in a very discreditable scene. It will be remembered that in the session of 1845 he alluded to the painful collision that had taken place in

* See *ante*, 125-6.

† Mr. Disraeli was not satisfied with preaching this doctrine of party obligations in the "Vindication"; he afterwards, as we all know, not only acted upon it, but preached it most vigorously in 1867. Speaking at Edinburgh, after he had carried Household Suffrage, he said that it would have been "*a fatal position that one of the great constitutional parties of England should commence their programme by the admission that upon the most important and interesting of public questions they were to be considered to be debarred from ever interfering.*"—(Speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer at Edinburgh. Apply this principle to the position of Sir Robert Peel with regard to Free Trade in 1846, and does it not recommend Sir Robert Peel's line of action?

1843 between Sir Robert Peel and Mr. Cobden, after the assassination of Mr. Drummond, Sir Robert Peel's secretary. In 1846 Sir Robert Peel and Mr. Cobden were on the best of terms: with characteristic good taste, Mr. Disraeli again sought to open the old sore between them.

Speaking of some condemnation that had been passed on foul-mouthed Mr. Ferrand, Mr. Disraeli asked why did not "the gentlemen of the League" vindicate their "character as to assassination," which had been impugned by Sir Robert Peel? "Why not," he said, "prosecute the right hon. Baronet? Here is an 'antler'd monarch of the woods;' why hunt 'small deer'?" *

After this thrust at the Premier came the celebrated attack upon Mr. Roebuck's "melodramatic malignity and Sadler's Wells sort of sarcasm." †

Let us turn from these wretched personalities, and this attempt to stir up old discords, to the manly and generous contrast presented in the speeches of Sir Robert Peel and Mr. Cobden. The Premier declared that the expression he had used had been totally misunderstood; and if he had not sufficiently explained this before, he was rejoiced at the new opportunity for "fully and unequivocally withdrawing an imputation on the hon. Member for Stockport, which was thrown out in the heat of debate under an erroneous impression of his meaning." ‡ Mr. Cobden spoke in exactly the same spirit. He acknowledged that "he too felt regret for the terms in which he had alluded to the right hon.

* Hansard, 3 S. lxxxiv. 244. † *Ibid.* 246. ‡ *Ibid.* 248.

Baronet. He sincerely hoped," he said, rebuking though not naming Mr. Disraeli, "that all either he (Mr. Cobden) or the right hon. Baronet had previously said on that subject would be obliterated from their recollection, and that no one on either side of the House, after what had passed that night, would attempt to revive the matter or make any allusion to it." *

On this same night (February 27) the debate on the Corn Law, which had dragged its weary length along for twelve nights, was at last brought to a close. Lord George Bentinck was the last speaker.

Mr. Disraeli's account of this speech is one of the most amusing things even *he* has written. The speech was a mass of ill-digested information—the production of a mind quite incapable of grasping principles, and of a man who, entirely unaccustomed to serious thought or to commercial questions, flattered himself that he had mastered a subject by cramming his head with figures. The speech, too, is filled with dark forebodings and prophecies; the destruction of English prosperity and the setting of England's sun are proved to inevitably result from Free Trade. Yet this production of a narrow, prejudiced, and untrained intellect receives terms of praise from Mr. Disraeli that would be fulsome, even if the adulation had been offered to a great and enlightened statesman. It was "recognised very soon," writes Mr. Disraeli, "that Bentinck was master of his subject." †

"Sir Robert Peel looked round very often with that expression of appreciation which it was impossible for

* *Ibid.* 248-9. † "Life of Bentinck," 97.

his nature to refuse to parliamentary success, even when the ability displayed was hostile to his projects,"* and so on.

Immediately after the conclusion of Lord George Bentinck's speech the division was taken. Here was the result, in Mr. Disraeli's own beautiful language:—

"In a house of five hundred and eighty-one members present, the amendment of the protectionists was defeated only by ninety-seven; and two hundred and forty-two gentlemen, in spite of desertion, difficulty, and defeat, still maintained the 'chastity of their honour.'" †

Thus foiled in their first attempt to stop the Corn Bill, the Protectionists resorted to a policy of delay, and shrank from no dodge to postpone the Bill to such a late date that the House of Lords might have a decent excuse for exercising its chief function of delaying just and necessary measures. The Government, unfortunately for themselves, helped the plans of their enemies by the introduction of an Irish Coercion Bill.

During the year 1845, there was a more than usually severe outbreak of crime in Ireland. Murder walked rampant through the land. The murders were of two classes: some of them were committed by landlords, and were called legal; some were committed by tenants, and were, of course, illegal. In the session of 1846, Sir Robert Peel brought in an Act to put down crime; but, curiously enough, the Bill proposed to put down only one quality of crime: it proposed to extirpate illegal murder, which is, of course, dangerous, but left

* *Ibid.* † *Ibid.* 109.

untouched legal murder, which is infinitely more perilous.

Now, this Bill interfered in a curious way with the Corn Law measure, and placed the Government in a strange and awkward dilemma. They were, of course, most anxious to pass the Corn Bill; and to pass it quickly in the House of Commons.

On the other hand, a Bill which had the repression of assassination as its professed object, of course demanded immediate attention, and if the circumstances permitted, should be immediately forced by the Government into law.

However, against the rapid passage of the Bill, three obstacles immediately arose. In the first place, as has been seen, it was the determination of the Protectionists to postpone, if possible, the third reading of the Corn Bill till after Easter, in the hope of thus defeating it by delay; the introduction of a new, important, and strongly opposed Bill offered them, of course, an opportunity which was extremely tempting for carrying out this purpose.

Next, the Irish members, who followed the lead of O'Connell, were of opinion that the Bill was cruelly oppressive and altogether uncalled for; and—a small, but at the same time compact and determined section—they had resolved to oppose the Coercion Bill at every stage.

Finally, there were the Whigs, who were not enthusiastic in favour of the Bill, and who, of course, would be more than human if they had not some desire

to profit by the break-up which the measure caused in the Conservative ranks.

On Monday, March 30th, leave was asked to introduce the Coercion Bill. As everybody knows, this request is usually granted as a matter of course, but so strong had grown the desire to oppose the Bill, that even this favour was denied, and a strange coalition—the herald of future and fatal coalitions—took place. The amendment was proposed by Sir William Somerville, an Irish Whig, and seconded by Mr. Smith O'Brien, a Repealer; and was supported with equal ardour by Lord John Russell and Daniel O'Connell. And, finally, the Protectionists gave it but a conditional support. The result was that the Irish members and the Whigs succeeded in preventing Sir Robert Peel from passing the first reading of the Coercion Bill before Easter, and the Easter vacation found the Government decidedly lowered in prestige. They were still further damaged by the events which took place immediately after the end of the recess, for, owing to various causes, a whole week passed without their making the slightest progress either with their Corn or their Coercion Bill. In the meantime, another danger to the Government had arisen; a *rapprochement* was taking place between the Protectionists and those of the Irish members—like Mr. Smith O'Brien—who were violently opposed to the Coercion, and but lukewarmly attached, if not hostile, to the Corn Law Bill On April 24—by way of finding out whether a coalition against the Coercion Bill and the Ministry was possible

between the two sections—Mr. Smith O'Brien asked Lord George Bentinck—*inter alia*—whether, in the present condition of Ireland, his Protectionist friends would consent to a temporary opening of the ports to corn, free of duty. This question led to a long debate, thus again interfering with the progress of the Coercion Bill. Such a repetition of failure seriously alarmed both the Government and the chief advocates of Free Trade. Mr. Cobden rose to complain of the Protectionists and of the Government; of the former for their factious opposition, and of the latter for their introduction of the Coercion Bill.

In the course of this speech, Mr. Cobden used a sentence by accident which had serious results. He was arguing that whatever temporary success the coalition of the member for Limerick (Mr. Smith O'Brien) and Lord George Bentinck might have in defeating Sir Robert Peel's measure, the Corn Laws were doomed. These laws might still be supported by the friends of Lord George Bentinck, but there were other people to be considered—there were the people of England. "I don't mean," went on Mr. Cobden, "the country party, but the people living in the towns, and who will govern this country."*

The last sentence in this passage is open to misunderstanding—if taken by itself. It might be interpreted to mean that the towns should govern the country. But, taking the passage in conjunction with what preceded and followed it, the meaning is plainly

* *Ibid.* 3 S. lxxxv. 1010.

enough this: that, however these aristocratic landlords might rave, whatever devices they might employ to defeat Sir Robert Peel's Bill, the people generally were determined that, for once and all, the Corn Laws should be abolished. That this was the meaning of it is made perfectly clear by the sentence which follows:—

"I tell him that *the English people, and the Scotch, and the Welsh, and I believe the Irish too,* are, from what I have heard, determined not to be content with a suspension, but to have a total abolition of the Corn Law."*

The speech of Mr. Cobden was, as a whole, favourable to the Government, and a crushing condemnation of the tactics of the Protectionists. It received accordingly a considerable amount of applause from the Treasury Bench; and Mr. Disraeli, knowing the readiness to take offence of the insolent dullards by whom he was followed, saw that this circumstance might be utilized against Sir Robert Peel. He first accused Mr. Cobden of defining the people of England "as the persons who live in the towns"—which, as I have shown, was altogether a forced construction on Mr. Cobden's words; and then went on to say,—

"The right hon. Baronet immediately cheered that expression. The circumstance struck me at the time; for it came from the same right hon. individual who was once so proud of being at the head of the gentlemen of England. At the moment that the hon.

* *Ibid.* 1010-11.

Member for Stockport, in a tone of menace, threatened the country party with the control of public opinion, and said that a powerful sentiment of indignation would arise among the people of England at their conduct, in the most frank and open spirit he gave them his definition of what the people were, as being the inhabitants of the towns. The right hon. Baronet cheered that sentiment—he accepted that definition."*

This is the second example I have given, in my account of this session, of the unscrupulous use Mr. Disraeli is ready to make of an accidental phrase. The reader has not forgotten to what purpose Mr. Disraeli put Sir Robert Peel's innocent words with regard to an ancient monarchy, a proud aristocracy, and a reformed House of Commons. And here again we have him pursuing the same kind of tactics. Is this mode of warfare honest,—is it honourable? Is the greatest victory obtained by such weapons a victory to be proud of?

I have shown that the phrase of Mr. Cobden was innocent enough; that all he meant to say was that the people were determined and able to overcome faction. But suppose Mr. Cobden's words had the meaning attributed to them by Mr. Disraeli, was Mr. Disraeli justified in making his charge against Sir Robert Peel? Even if Sir Robert Peel thought the towns should rule the country, was it likely that a man of his cautious character would cheer the expression of such an opinion? But what did Mr.

* *Ibid.* lxxxv. 1015-16.

Disraeli care about fair play when he had an enemy to strike? He saw an opportunity for playing on the folly and mean passions of his Protectionist followers; why should he—"a being reckless of all things save his own prosperity"—why should he not catch at the chance?

A long and desultory discussion ensued, and the natural result followed. Mr. Disraeli was shown by Mr. Cobden to have totally misrepresented his words; Sir Robert Peel, confirmed by several others, proved that Mr. Disraeli's assertion that he had cheered the supposed definition was incorrect; and Mr. Disraeli had to apologize both for the misrepresentation and the false charge.* Was there ever a man of any importance who had to withdraw so many serious personal charges? Yet mark how, in spite of detection after detection, refutation after refutation; in spite of a long series of abject apology following upon confident assertion—he goes on in his path of vituperation unabashed.

The first reading of the Coercion Bill was passed on the 2nd of May. It was supported by Lord John Russell, by Lord George Bentinck, and the greater part of the Protectionist members.† And thus the

* Mr. Disraeli had the coolness to conclude his apology with these words: "But I would wish the House to understand that—whatever may be our party struggles, or what is called personal acrimony, *which I never did feel*, that is the truth—*I would not for a moment think of rising to take advantage of a cheer, and to make a charge, ad I the slightest doubt about the matter.*"—*Ibid.* lxxxv. 1021.

† Mr. Disraeli did not vote.—*Life of Bentinck*, 206

Ministry were relieved of one of the great obstacles in their way, and had reason to hope that their Corn Law would pass without much further delay.

Sir Robert Peel, however, reckoned without his host: even yet he did not know the lengths of absurdity to which the Protectionist orators were prepared to go. In the course of his speech on the Coercion Bill, Sir Robert Peel happened to make casually the remark that the restrictions on trade, which he formerly believed to be "impolitic," he then believed to be also unjust. Lord George Bentinck actually raised a debate on this phrase!

In the course of this "injustice debate," as he himself calls it,* Mr. Disraeli made a long speech, of which the only point worth noticing is that he had—shall I call it the courage?—to quote Mr. John Stuart Mill as a friend of Protection! † This audacious misrepresentation met with speedy punishment. On May 8, Mr. Roebuck, rising to speak on the Corn Bill, devoted, as he was fond of doing in those days, some of his attention to Mr. Disraeli, and made an attack on that gentleman, which is to my mind quite as powerful as any Mr. Disraeli made on Sir Robert Peel, with the important addition that it was wholly true, while the attacks of Mr. Disraeli were often partly false. In this speech, Mr. Roebuck touched the very root of Mr. Disraeli's motives, and of the success of his oratory; and he showed that it was to the mean passions and dull intelligences on which

* *Ibid.* 217. † Hansard, 3 S. lxxxvi. 88-9.

Mr. Disraeli played, and his unscrupulous skill in playing upon them, we must attribute the success of his harangues. Referring scornfully to Mr. Disraeli's ridiculous assumption of a knowledge of political economy, Mr. Roebuck went on: "He would leave out of consideration all the garnish that surrounded this proposition of the hon. Member's, because the hon. Member understood perfectly well the temper of the House, and knew that, *however backward might be his speech—however shallow his reasoning—no matter what fallacies he might put forward—still, if he seasoned it with a little personality, it would be sure to pass.*"*

Mr. Roebuck next took up Mr. Disraeli's oft-repeated charge of inconsistency against Sir Robert Peel, and was easily able to show with what ill-grace it came from him above all other men. Mr. Disraeli, he said, "had begun life as a tragedian, but he has left off tragedy, and he now found it much more successful to devote his talents to genteel comedy." † Then he recalled to Mr. Disraeli's memory the days when he —the rampant True Blue of the moment—was a *protégé* of Mr. Hume and O'Connell; and he reminded Mr. Disraeli, who had just indulged in an attack of characteristic impertinence on Radicals, that he himself "had been in the habit of going to meetings at Marylebone spouting radicalism." ‡ Finally, summing up Mr. Disraeli's motives and principles, he declared that it was not quite fair to twit one man about his "change of opinion, while another man was found

* *Ibid.* 274-5. † *Ibid.* 276. ‡ *Ibid.*

who took up a particular set of opinions, *at a time when his own personal interests were concerned, and when he thought he might get something from a party by joining them*, and afterwards, on failing by one set of opinions to gain any regard for himself, picks up another, and *plays an opposite character from the same motive.* For a man to complain of that sort of change was what he could understand; but that change was, he thought, not like a statesman, but like something else."*

Those charges of inconsistency—of gross and interested inconsistency, brought by Mr. Roebuck against Mr. Disraeli are, as a reader of these pages will see, founded on indisputable fact. How comes it, then—what can we think of the intelligence of the Protectionist members, when such a man was allowed to lead a crusade against another man's inconsistency?

Finally, Mr. Roebuck proved that Mr. Disraeli had been guilty of the grossest and most barefaced misrepresentation of Mr. John Stuart Mill's meaning.

Mr. Disraeli made an extremely lame attempt to answer this unanswerable attack; made his old claim to perfect consistency; and gave a new version, in addition to the many he had already propounded, of his relations with O'Connell.† In the course of his explanation on this latter point, he spoke of the Irish tribune as "a great man"; an estimate very different from the contemptuous and underrating tone he had

* *Ibid.* † *Ibid.* 279-80.

adopted towards him in all he had written and said from 1835 up to this year.

There is only one fault, perhaps, to be found with the tone of Mr. Roebuck's reply to Mr. Disraeli. It is the fault which has been laid to the charge of a previous work of mine on Lord Beaconsfield. Mr. Roebuck, as I am accused of doing, took Lord Beaconsfield too seriously. I deny that this charge has any foundation against me. I have brought heavy charges against Lord Beaconsfield, and I have pressed them home, but to me his inconsistencies, his want of principle, his alternate support and denunciation of the same measures, his alternate flattery and denunciation of the same men, appear a perfectly natural outgrowth of his character. However grave the situation, however momentous the circumstances,—whether he be the Corypheus of an enthusiastic party of youth, religion, and feudalism, or the leader of an infuriated faction against the alleged abandonment of principle by a great Conservative chief,—whether he be the financial minister of the greatest commercial country in the world, or whether he reach the still higher position of being the sole arbiter of the lives and fortunes of millions of men, existing and to come,—in all those situations, I say, he retains, to any clear-eyed student of his character, his original littleness. Behind the greatness, and, in some cases, the terrible solemnity of the occasion, and behind Lord Beaconsfield's own mask of honest anger, of deep piety, of lofty patriotism, of real seriousness of character, you

can see, if you have but an eye, young Vivian Grey in a drawing-room, saying pleasant nothings to silly women, playing skilfully on the passions of vain and weak men,—frivolous, egotistic, self-seeking, utterly insincere. And, even if you be but purblind, there is no excuse for you not seeing through Lord Beaconsfield. For the marvellous thing about this great and most successful of charlatans is, that he is a self-confessed charlatan. He has deceived this country, after he had told it he was going to deceive it. He has deceived this country in the very way in which he said he would deceive it, and by the very means: the mountebank, before proceeding to his performance, took his audience behind the scenes.

When Lord Beaconsfield, in his Vindication, gravely quotes a passage from Bolingbroke in support of a certain set of political views, I at once go back to the scene in "Vivian Grey" where that young gentleman invents a sentence from Bolingbroke in confirmation of certain opinions. When he speaks in the most seemingly serious manner in defence of the Corn Laws, the passage in "Vivian Grey" comes back to my memory in which Mr. Stapylton Toad's success in dishonestly playing the same part is told with a great deal of admiration. When Lord Beaconsfield pays court, with indecent ostentation, to Hume, or to Peel, or to Bentinck, I simply see a real Vivian Grey paying court to a live Marquess of Carabas. When Lord Beaconsfield openly violates all political principle, I remember that he is the writer of the aphorism that in politics there is no

honour. When he panders to the meanest passions of the Protectionist party, I recall that he professed his intention of regarding mankind as a base herd whose weaknesses were to be humoured, and whose vilest passions were to be assumed, and who to the wise man were merely a great game. Finally, when I see him opposing a measure that was to rescue millions from starvation, or adopting a policy that might bring a bloody death to hundreds of thousands, I remember his own description of himself as a being reckless of all consequences save his own prosperity. It is only those who believe in Lord Beaconsfield that can be said to take him seriously. But those who share the opinion of him entertained by the writer of this book cannot fairly be charged with such want of humour. To them, at least, Lord Beaconsfield did not reveal the joke through Vivian Grey in vain.

On the 11th of May the third reading of the Corn Bill was proposed; and, in accordance with their policy of factious opposition, the Protectionists, through the Marquis of Granby,* proposed an amendment.

The debate lasted for three nights. On the third night, the 15th May, Mr. Disraeli spoke. With this speech I will deal as I have done with many others delivered during this session,—I will, that is to say,

* The speech of the Marquis of Granby is, it is scarcely necessary to say, highly applauded by Mr. Disraeli. "He placed the whole question before the House in a style comprehensive, masculine, and sincere."—*Life of Bentinck*, p. 223. Lord Beaconsfield is not so ready to flatter the Marquis of Granby now; I would venture to say he snubs him.

omit his exploded fallacies and falsified predictions, and give those passages only in which he made a personal attack upon the Minister.

He began by alluding to his attack of the previous session on Sir Robert Peel in which he had said that Protection appeared to him to be in the same danger as Protestantism in 1828. In connection with this reference he made the statement—the importance of which will be seen by-and-by—that Lord George Bentinck disapproved wholly of this assault on the Prime Minister, and that he continued a firm believer of that statesman up to 1846.* He then went on to describe the Prime Minister as one who "from the days of Mr. Horner to the days of the Honourable Member for Stockport" had "traded on the ideas and intelligence of others. His life," he went on, "has been one great appropriation clause. He is a burglar of others' intellect. Search the Index of Beatson, from the days of the Conqueror to the termination of the last reign, there is no statesman who has committed political petty larceny on so great a scale." †

The action of the Ministry he described as "the huckstering tyranny of the Treasury Bench," and the Ministers as "political pedlars that bought their party in the cheapest market and sold us in the dearest." ‡

Sir Robert Peel made a stinging and contemptuous reply to this remark. He said he would be offering an insult to the country and the House if he were to condescend to bandy personalities on such an

* Hansard, 3 S. lxxxvi. 673. † *Ibid.* 675. ‡ *Ibid.* 676.

occasion. "Sir," he went on, "I foresaw that the course which I have taken from a sense of public duty would expose me to serious sacrifices. I foresaw, as its inevitable result, that I must forfeit friendships which I most highly valued—that I must interrupt political relations in which I felt sincere pride; *but the smallest of all the penalties which I anticipated were the continued venomous attacks of the Member for Shrewsbury.*" *

Then he turned to the assertion of Mr. Disraeli that he had been trading on other people's ideas since the days of Horner, and asked Mr. Disraeli, pertinently enough, why, if such were his view of his character, he should have been so ready to give him his support in 1841.

"*It is still more surprising,*" went on Peel, "*that he should have been ready—as I think he was—to unite his fortunes with mine in office, thus implying the strongest proof which any public man can give of confidence in the honour and integrity of a Minister of the Crown.*" †

I think I have given the reader overwhelming evidence in corroboration of the statement Sir Robert Peel makes about Mr. Disraeli. I have shown how persistently, during his first session, Mr. Disraeli defended Sir Robert Peel's acts, and how lavishly he praised Sir Robert Peel himself. I have shown how Mr. Disraeli spoke of Sir Robert Peel at the Shrewsbury election of 1841, how he proclaimed the future

* *Ibid.* 689. † *Ibid.*

Premier "the greatest statesman of his age," how he wrote to Sir Robert Peel the news of his success, and how he described himself as one of Sir Robert's Peel's "humble but fervent supporters." And the reader has also seen, when Parliament assembled, and there was the trial of strength between Sir Robert Peel and Lord John Russell, with what vigour Mr. Disraeli attacked Russell and defended Peel. And, as has also been seen, Mr. Disraeli was not satisfied with paying court to Sir Robert Peel by his tongue. Sir Robert Peel in "Runnymede" was "the only hope of the suffering people," and in "Coningsby" was "a great personage," "a great man," etc., etc.

Therefore, I say, there is overwhelming evidence in favour of the statement that Mr. Disraeli was seeking office from Sir Robert Peel in 1841. How does Mr. Disraeli meet the charge? Did he admit frankly what it was impossible to deny? Did he make a candid confession of his sins? Oh no! Mr. Disraeli will never be caught doing that. Mr. Disraeli quibbled.

"I never shall," he said, "I never shall—it is totally foreign to my nature—make an application for any place. But in 1841, when the Government was formed . . . . an individual possessing, as I believe him to possess, the most intimate and complete confidence of the right hon. Gentleman, called on me and communicated with me. There was certainly some conversation. . . . . There was some communication, not at all of that nature which the House perhaps

supposes, between the right hon. Gentleman and me, but of the most amicable kind. I can only say this—it was a transaction not originated by me, but which any Gentleman, I care not how high his honour or spirit, might entertain to-morrow." *

Now, I call this a quibbling answer, and for this reason: Mr. Disraeli, while admitting in fact the truth of Sir Robert Peel's statement, endeavours by a skilful and characteristic attempt at confusing the issue, to make Sir Robert Peel's statement appear false. Sir Robert Peel's assertion was that Mr. Disraeli was ready to take office under him in 1841. Mr. Disraeli cannot deny this, but he tries to escape by raising the new issue whether the office was sought by him or offered to him. He insinuates—but does not dare, as the reader will see, to openly assert—that the office was offered to him. I ask, is that likely? Is it likely that an expectant Premier—and one especially of the cold, uncommunicative, and haughty nature of Sir Robert Peel—would seek out a politician of the insignificance of Mr. Disraeli, for in 1841 he was insignificant?

But even if the assertion of Mr. Disraeli be correct, that the negotiations between him and Sir Robert Peel were carried on by a third person, it in no measure affects the merits of the question between them. If a third person did intervene, we may be sure that it was some friend whose kind offices Mr. Disraeli sought. And so it is evident that Mr. Disraeli, while endea-

* *Ibid.* 707-8.

vouring to suggest a denial, was in reality making a virtual admission of the truth of Sir Robert Peel's statement.

How like this whole contest is to the *Globe* controversy! In that controversy O'Connell and Hume brought against Mr. Disraeli the same charge that Sir Robert Peel brings against him now. They charged Mr. Disraeli, and they proved the charge, with seeking their patronage at one period of his career and loading them with vituperation at another; and, in answering them, Mr. Disraeli employed the same arts he employed in answering Sir Robert Peel. Forced to admit his relations of friendship, he sought to show that the friendship was not of his seeking; that O'Connell and Hume—then two of the most powerful politicians of England—sought his aid—then one of the most insignificant politicians in England. And, following exactly the same plan of tactics now, he tries to raise the impression that Sir Robert Peel was anxious for his services, not he for Sir Robert Peel's patronage.

Notwithstanding all the tactics, all the speeches, and all the vituperation of the Protectionists, the third reading of the Corn Law Bill passed the House of Commons on May 15, by a majority of ninety-eight votes. The Bill was immediately sent up to the House of Lords, and there, after a three nights' debate, passed the second reading on the 28th of May, by the (for the House of Lords) enormous majority of forty-seven. Next day began the Whitsun recess. Thus once more did the Government seem to have overcome

all obstacles, and to be free from all danger. And now there seemed no point from which they could be attacked. But Sir Robert Peel did not take into account the want of honesty and consistency into which Mr. Disraeli was able to educate his party.

"How was Sir Robert Peel," writes Mr. Disraeli, who was carrying out in real life the maxims of his hero, "to be turned out? Here was a question which might well occupy the musing hours of a Whitsun recess." *

But, as Mr. Disraeli points out, this was not an easy question to answer. A formal vote of want of confidence had but little chance of being passed. A large number, if not the majority of the Liberal members, were still under the fresh influence of gratitude to Sir Robert Peel for carrying the Corn Law, and would not join in any direct censure on his administration. Again an interval of two to three weeks might be expected to elapse before the Corn Bill came down from the House of Lords; until that Bill was safe, the House of Commons would refuse to join in any attack. Meantime, the Protectionist leaders thought the attack, to be successful, should be made immediately, and while their ranks were still closely united by their bitter feelings.

"In this state of affairs," writes Mr. Disraeli, "it was submitted to the consideration of Lord George Bentinck that there appeared only one course to be taken, and which, though beset with difficulties, was

* "Life of Bentinck," 230.
† *Ibid.* 240

with boldness and dexterity at least susceptible of success."

We need scarcely say that the counsellor of Lord George Bentinck was Mr. Disraeli, and certainly the advice he gave was a strange one.

"The Government had announced their intention of moving the second reading of the Irish Coercion Bill on Monday, the 8th of June. If this second reading were opposed both by Lord John Russell and Lord George Bentinck, the defeat of the Administration seemed more than probable." *

It did certainly require "boldness" and "dexterity," to say nothing of many other requisite qualities, to carry out this programme. For the Bill, the second reading of which Mr. Disraeli advised Lord George Bentinck to assist Lord John Russell in rejecting, both Lord George Bentinck and Lord John Russell had supported on the first reading.

On the first reading of the Bill, Lord George Bentinck had described the condition of Ireland as such that no man "can pursue the occupations of industry, or carry out any improvements, without an immediate prospect of being arrested in those improvements by the hand of the broad-day murderer or the midnight assassin. For these reasons," he added, emphatically, "it is that *I call on those with whom I act to give their hearty and honest support to Her Majesty's Administration,* so long as they show an earnest desire to put down murder and protect pro-

* *Ibid.*

perty in Ireland." "I shall certainly," he wound up by saying, "support the Government in forwarding the measure." *

In the face of this support of the Coercion Bill, Lord George Bentinck had the calmness, following Mr. Disraeli's advice, to prepare opposition to its second reading. In leading an attack to drive Sir Robert Peel from office for inconsistency, Lord George Bentinck was not ashamed to be guilty of this gross act of inconsistency himself.

The excuse given by Lord George Bentinck for his change of attitude is very flimsy. He says that "the Protectionists were prepared to support the Coercion Bill if the Ministry proved the sincerity of their belief in the existence of a dire emergency for such a Bill 'by pressing the measure with all speed through the House.'" † He then proceeded to argue that the Government had not pressed forward the Bill with anything like the necessary speed. Some of his statements on this point appear to me open to question. But admitting them all to be true, it does not establish his case. His contention is that a Bill for the protection of life in Ireland is urgently necessary, and his objection to the action of the Government is that they have not been sufficiently prompt in meeting this urgent necessity. But it is plain that if the Bill of Sir Robert Peel were defeated by Bentinck, the measure for which there was so crying a demand

* Hansard, 3 S. lxxxv. 308-10.

† *Ibid.* lxxxvii. 178.

would be postponed to a still more remote date. If, as Lord George Bentinck said, murder were walking rampant through Ireland by day and by night, not an hour should be lost in putting it down by law, and he was himself committing the crime of which he accused the Premier, by endeavouring to add to the period during which assassination would be allowed to go on.

To do Lord George Bentinck justice, his first line of defence is not one to which he himself attaches much importance; he abandons it almost as soon as it is made, and frankly confesses that it is hatred of the Ministry for passing the Corn Law, and not his objection to the management of the Coercion Bill, that dictated his opposition. "I, and the gentlemen around me, refuse to trust Her Majesty's Ministers. Yes, Sir, we will no longer trust Her Majesty's Government." *

This is the poor excuse Lord George Bentinck gives for his extraordinary change of attitude on the Coercion Bill.

However, whether his excuses were good or bad, Lord George did oppose vehemently the second reading, and his opposition gave rise to one of the most startling episodes of the session.

On Monday, the 8th June, the debate began on the second reading. Sir William Somerville, on the part of the Whigs, proposed the rejection of the Bill. We have the authority of Mr. Disraeli for the statement that up to the time the House met, the course of Lord

* *Ibid.* 180.

George Bentinck, and of the Protectionists generally, was undecided. So far as there was any agreement, it was in the opinion that opposition to the Coercion Bill "would fail," and would "become unpopular in the country." *

"Nothing," writes Mr. Disraeli, "was decided when Lord George took his seat, and while Sir William Somerville was moving his amendment, that the Coercion Bill should be read that day six months. His solitary supporter in the council was sitting by his side; they had agreed *their course should be decided by the report which they should receive from a gentleman who had the best acquaintance with the individual feelings of the members of the party,* and who, through absence from town, had not unfortunately been present at the previous consultations. While Sir William Somerville was closing his speech with an appeal to Lord George Bentinck, this much-expected individual appeared at the Bar." †

Lord George Bentinck goes out at the conclusion of Sir William Somerville's speech, has an interview with his agent, and when he returns, says to Mr. Disraeli, "There are no means of calculating at this moment how our men will go, but he agrees with us. It may be perilous, but if we lose this chance, the traitor will escape. I will make the plunge, and as soon as I can. *There is a rumour that Lord John is hardly up to the mark.* I suppose he has heard that our men will

* "Life of Bentinck," 247.
† *Ibid.*

not vote against the Bill. *Now if I speak early and strongly*, it will encourage them to be decided." *

We now see the position completely. Lord George Bentinck was uncertain of his own followers, and uncertain of Lord John Russell. And he came to the conclusion that a vehement speech from him would put an end to wavering, both in the one and the other. In other words, the violence of his language was not the spontaneous and resistless outburst of passionate indignation; it was passion, calculated beforehand, and utilized for party purposes.

Bentinck's speech may be described as of Newmarket coarseness. He declared that Sir Robert Peel was "supported by none but his forty paid janissaries, and some seventy other renegades;" and that he had "lost the confidence of every honest man in this House, and of every honest and honourable-minded man out of this House."†

This passage was assuredly bitter enough, and it created much indignation and disgust. But a passage was to follow in which a still more shameless and cruel blow was to be struck at the Minister. "We are told now," said Lord George Bentinck,—"we hear from the right hon. Baronet himself—that .... it would have been base and dishonest in him, and inconsistent with his duty to his Sovereign, if he had concealed his opinions after he had changed them; *but I have lived long enough, I am sorry to say, to remember, and remember with sorrow—with deep and*

* *Ibid.* 248. † Hansard, 3 S. lxxxvii. 182.

heartfelt sorrow—the time when the right hon. Baronet chased and hunted an illustrious relative of mine to death; and when he stated that he could not support his Ministry, because a leading Member of it, though he had changed no opinion—yet, from his position, was likely to forward the question of Catholic Emancipation; *that was the conduct of the right hon. Baronet in* 1827; *but in* 1829 *the right hon. Baronet told the House that he had changed his opinions on that subject in* 1825, *and had communicated that change of opinion to the Earl of Liverpool. That however, did not prevent the right hon. Baronet in* 1827 *from getting up in his place and stating that he had severed himself from Mr. Canning's Government because he could not support a Government of which the chief Minister was then favourable to the measure, which it appeared afterwards the right hon. Baronet had approved of two years before.* If, therefore, the right hon. Baronet says, it is base and dishonest and inconsistent with the duty of a Minister to his Sovereign to continue to maintain opinions after he has changed them, does not the right hon. Baronet, I ask, stand convicted, on his own verdict, of base and dishonest conduct, and conduct inconsistent with the duty of a Minister to his Sovereign?" *

The reader needs not be told how serious are the charges brought in this passage against Sir Robert Peel. It is hard to imagine more serious charges

* *Ibid.* 182-3.

against any Minister, or, indeed, against any man. Sir Robert Peel is accused of lying, treachery, and the ruthless persecution of a rival unto death.

Now one of the questions that appear to me most important in investigating the history of this remarkable charge is this: who originated it? Did Lord George Bentinck start this charge of his own pure motion, or at the suggestion of Mr. Disraeli, or was the charge made by Bentinck, partly from his own personal feeling, and partly at the suggestion of Mr. Disraeli?

The burden of proof appears to me to favour the last of these three solutions. Lord George Bentinck in all probability, at one time, entertained feelings of irritation against Sir Robert Peel for his treatment of Canning. There is no doubt that Canning's wife felt the deepest anger against the Duke of Wellington, Peel, and the others, who, on the illness of Lord Liverpool, seceded from the Canning Cabinet. And when Mr. Huskisson, Lord Palmerston, and Mr. Grant afterwards joined the Ministry of Wellington and Peel, the widow of Canning denounced them for throwing in their lot with what she described as the "murderers of her husband." Therefore, Lord George Bentinck may have inherited a family prejudice against Sir Robert Peel, which would make his allusions to the relations of Peel and Canning appear the spontaneous outcome of his own mind. But it must strike one as a remarkable coincidence that Mr. Disraeli should in a previous Session, at a time when

probably there was no intimacy, and certainly no friendship, between him and Lord George Bentinck, have made a somewhat similar charge against Sir Robert Peel. The reader has not forgotten that, when Sir Robert Peel quoted Canning's famous verses about candid friends, Mr. Disraeli replied by some sarcastic observations, the tendency of which was to insinuate that Sir Robert Peel's friendship to Canning had been faithless and treacherous.

Now, to any one who compares the speeches of Mr. Disraeli and Lord George Bentinck in 1846, the notion must often occur that the ideas of the one, and even the expressions, bear a strong likeness to those of the other. Some people might say that Mr. Disraeli had borrowed his ideas from Lord George Bentinck. But this fact is rather fatal to the theory, that Mr. Disraeli had expressed the ideas common to him and to Lord George Bentinck, long before his friendship with Lord George Bentinck had begun.

Taking, then, the influence which Mr. Disraeli exercised over Lord George Bentinck, taking also the fact that Mr. Disraeli alluded to the relations of Canning and Peel, in 1845, before he had become the friend of Bentinck, it is, I think, fair to conclude that the allusion to Canning in Bentinck's speech on the Coercion Bill was suggested by Mr. Disraeli.

And these considerations enable us to form a true estimate of the Canning episode of 1846.

What was Canning to Mr. Disraeli? Mr. Disraeli was no relative of Canning's. Mr. Disraeli was no

connection of Canning's. Mr. Disraeli never knew Canning; the only relation—if it can be called relation—he ever had with Canning, was that he heard him speak once in the House of Commons; and yet Mr. Disraeli was the prime mover in all this business! It was Mr. Disraeli who used Lord George Bentinck through it all! It was Mr. Disraeli who, calmly, coolly, without the least personal feeling in the matter, got this other man to make a party move under the guise of deep and sincere sorrow. His was the tranquil hand that moved this puppet to put *his* hand to his bleeding heart; it was he who squeezed tears from the puppet's eyes over a transaction nineteen years past! How scrupulous these men who maintained "the chastity of their honour" were in their attacks upon their enemy!

All the facts I have cited irresistibly point to this as the true view of Lord George Bentinck's conduct in this affair. But we have further evidence. As we have said before, Mr. Disraeli made an attack during the session of 1845 on Sir Robert Peel in reference to this very point—the relations between him and Canning. Now if the feeling of anger with Peel for his treatment of Canning were of that intense nature in the bosom of Lord George Bentinck which he represented it to be, it would be an ever-present feeling—a feeling ready to explode on the least occasion. When, therefore, Mr. Disraeli made his clever, skilful, well-prepared attack on Peel, with respect to his relations with Canning, ought not

Lord George Bentinck—supposing him ever-consumed by his recollection of Canning's unfair treatment—to have gone and hung on Mr. Disraeli's neck? Did Lord George Bentinck do this? Did he, finding that there was at least one man who sympathized with the sorrow, *repostum in altâ mente*, did he at once become the ally and the friend of that man? I will let Mr. Disraeli himself speak.

"More than a year ago I rose in my place and said, that it appeared to me that Protection was in about the same state as Protestantism was in 1828. I remember my friends were very indignant with me for that assertion, but they have since been so kind as to observe that instead of being a calumny it was only a prophecy. But I am bound to say, from personal experience, that, with the very humble exception to which I have referred, I think the right hon. Baronet may congratulate himself on his complete success in having entirely deceived his party, *for even the noble Lord, the member for Lynn himself, in a moment of frank conversation, assured me that he had not till the very last moment the slightest doubt of the right hon. Gentleman.*" *

So that Lord George Bentinck, far from approving Mr. Disraeli's attack in 1845 on Peel in reference to his relations with Canning, actually disapproved of them!

Is there any further proof required to show that Bentinck's indignation was got up—a mere pretence

* Hansard, 3 S. lxxxvi. 673.

a skilful, but base party move? Is it not clear that it was informed and instigated by Mr. Disraeli, and adopted by Bentinck?

"Let us sympathise with the sorrows we do not feel!"

Sir Robert Peel delivered his reply to Bentinck, and his other assailants, on June 12. The reply appears to me completely satisfactory. In moderation of language, dignity of style, and general evenness of temper, it presents a fine contrast to the jockey-like coarseness, rudeness, and ill-temper of Mr. Disraeli's friend, patron, and tool.

First, he asked how, if Lord George Bentinck so strongly resented his treatment of Canning, he had continued to follow his lead—to accept his political friendship? He pointed out that it was seventeen years since his speech in 1829, nineteen since the occurrence of 1827, and that Lord George Bentinck had been a member of Parliament since 1826. How was it, then, that during all these long years, he had heard the charge for the first time on the previous Monday? "There may have been intermissions; but since 1835 I have been honoured with the noble Lord's cordial, and I must say his pure and disinterested support. He called me his right hon. Friend—he permitted me to be the leader of the party to which he belonged—he saw me united to his own immediate connections and followers; and never until Monday last, in June, 1846, did I harbour the suspicion that the noble Lord entertained such feelings

in respect to me—a man who hunted and chased his relation to death." *

And then Sir Robert Peel proceeded to show by quotations from his speeches in 1827, uttered in the presence of Canning, and replied to by Canning, that it was impossible he could have declared, in 1825, an opinion in favour of Catholic claims. In one of the speeches made in 1827, he entered into an explanation of his reasons for resigning his office when Canning succeeded to Lord Liverpool. The principal reason he assigns is that he differed from Canning on the question of Catholic claims; and the statement is distinctly made in the speech of 1827, that this difference between him and Canning existed and was expressed in 1825.

Sir Robert Peel next quoted a speech of Canning's which immediately followed his, and this quotation shows that Canning fully admitted that Peel had frankly avowed in 1825 his opposition to the Catholic claims.

This defence, which appears to me a complete answer to the charge of Lord George Bentinck, did not, however, satisfy him, or the ruthless gentleman by whom those attacks on Peel were inspired.

On June 15, Mr. Disraeli returned to the charge, and gave a re-hash of the case against Sir Robert Peel. Mr. Disraeli's speech was delivered on the third night of the debate on the Irish Coercion Bill. We have seen the inconsistency displayed by Lord George

* *Ibid.* lxxxvii. 432.

Bentinck on this Bill; we have seen that, beginning by supporting it, he ended by opposing it; we have seen that this change was the result of personal hatred of Peel, and of the idea that an advantage could be gained over him; and, finally, we have seen that, in order to encourage the opposition of the Whigs and of his own followers to the Bill, Bentinck did not scruple to rake up a scandal of nineteen years past, and to hide a party move under the guise of real sorrow and indignation. What will be thought of Mr. Disraeli, when, in the face of these facts, and in the face of the fact that he himself was going to revive Bentinck's cruel attack,—what will be thought of Mr. Disraeli, when he calmly introduces his speech by the assertion that he and his friends had "evinced a desire *not to treat in a party fashion* the measure now before us"? *

The earlier portion of Mr. Disraeli's speech I will pass over; it was probably not meant by himself to be anything more than the preface to the real point of his speech, the renewal of the attack on Peel.

"I now," said Mr. Disraeli, "approach a subject—to which I cannot allude without unaffected pain." †

This audacity of pretence to delicacy—to a feeling of pain, when everybody knew that Mr. Disraeli was in the very height of joy at commencing an attack on an enemy—proved too much even for the House of Commons, and laughter resounded. Not disconcerted, Mr. Disraeli changed ground, and affected to mean

* *Ibid.* 517. † *Ibid.* 528.

that the pain he felt was because of Canning, and not of Peel.

"Sir," he said, "there may be some who will treat with derision the memory of a great man, but I confess, whatever may be my feelings on the conduct of any individual, if he has been a distinguished citizen of this country, particularly if he has been an illustrious Member of this Senate, and particularly if he has left us for ever, I would not receive an allusion to his memory with the miserable sneer which I heard just now."*

The audacity of this passage is really marvellous. In the first place, as everybody can see, the House did not laugh, as Mr. Disraeli affects to believe, in derision of Canning. What the House laughed at, as Mr. Disraeli well knew, was at his affectation of pain in having to attack Peel. Again, mark the affectation of sorrow and veneration for the memory of Canning, the man whom he saw but once! As if Mr. Disraeli really cared one straw for Canning, his memory, or his wrongs. Finally, is it not a marvellous piece of "cheek" to lay claim to respect for the feelings of any distinguished citizen, "particularly if he has been an illustrious Member of this Senate," at the very moment when he was attacking, not merely without mercy, but without justice, a man who could certainly lay claim to be a "distinguished citizen" and "an illustrious Member of" that "Senate."

After this truthful preface, Mr. Disraeli proceeded

* *Ibid.*

to lay before the House his proofs that the charges advanced by Bentinck against Peel were well founded.

He dealt almost entirely with the charge that Peel had opposed Canning on the Catholic claims in 1827, although in 1829 he admitted that in 1825 he had expressed to Lord Liverpool agreement with those claims. He first complains that Peel had omitted to quote the speech of 1829, which contained this admission with regard to 1825.

"Now," said Mr. Disraeli, "it is a remarkable circumstance that the right hon. Gentleman did not read this speech. He read the speech which he had made in 1827, in presence of Mr. Canning; but the House will recollect that he never read the speech which the noble Lord alleged contained the great admission, and which was the only question before the House. The right hon. Gentleman referred to that speech, but never read it."*

Mr. Disraeli himself then read the speech, as reported in Hansard. He pointed out that the words in dispute —the words which make the alleged admission—are omitted from that report.

"Now, Sir," continued Mr. Disraeli, "I make no charge against the right hon. Gentleman, but I say that the speech I have read from is a garbled, a mutilated, or, to adopt the language of this House, a corrected report of the right hon. Gentleman's speech; and that it omits, and entirely omits, that important statement which is the great question to-night."†

* *Ibid.* 530. † *Ibid.* 531.

Then Mr. Disraeli went on to show that there were other reports of Peel's speech besides that in Hansard.

"It so happens that in those days there were two reports of what was said in this House; for there was then not merely Hansard, the speeches in which are generally corrected by hon. Gentlemen themselves, but there was also the 'Mirror of Parliament,' the speeches in which were taken in shorthand, *verbatim*, by the most able shorthand writers, most of them being men of education and intelligence, and at that time the speeches were published every three days. Now, sir, I call the attention of the House to what it appears from the 'Mirror of Parliament,' the right hon. Gentleman really said in that famous speech of 1829:—

"'So far as I am personally concerned, I beg to say, my own course is the same as that which suggested itself to my mind in 1825, when I was His Majesty's principal Minister for the Home Department, and found myself in a minority upon the Catholic question in this House. I felt that, looking at the numbers arrayed against me, my position as a minister was untenable. The moment that I found that I was in a minority on that question, I felt that it was no longer advisable that I should continue to be charged with the responsibility of Irish affairs. I stated to the Earl of Liverpool, who was then at the head of the Administration, that in consequence of the decision against me by the voices of the representatives of that country, the time was come when something respecting the Catholics ought, in my opinion, to be done, or that I

should be relieved from the duties of the office I held, as it was my anxious wish to be.'

"The words left out in the report of Hansard are these :—

"'I stated to the Earl of Liverpool, that in consequence of the decision against me by the voices of the representatives of Ireland, something respecting the Catholics ought, in my opinion, to be done.'"*

Mr. Disraeli had thus made out a strong case in favour of the statement that Sir Robert Peel had used the words making the admission, for he had shown that, while they were omitted in the report corrected by Peel himself, they occurred in the report produced independently.

"But this, Sir," continued Mr. Disraeli, "is only the commencement of my proof.

"Hon. Gentlemen may understand that though you may alter your speech for Hansard, you cannot alter the answer to it. There may be two versions of a speech—the speech for the House, and the speech for posterity. An hon. Gentleman, who was then the head of a party that had also been betrayed, the head of the Protestant party in this House, and who has since been a member of Her Majesty's Government, in answer to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, as it appeared in the 'Mirror of Parliament,' though not in Hansard, used this language :—

"'If at that period the policy of conceding the Catholic question were clear to the right hon. Gentle-

* *Ibid.* 531.

man, I say that, in justice to himself, in justice to his friends, in justice to the country, in justice to Mr. Canning himself, who had always been the able, powerful, and constant advocate of the Catholics, he ought not to have concealed it. If, as he now says, he had discovered in 1825 the necessity of passing this question, I ask why did he not say so in 1827, and give his support to Mr. Canning then, when the supposed difference between him and Mr. Canning obtained for him the support of many hon. Gentlemen who differed with him only on that, which I confess was the case with me.'

"Sir, that was a memorable speech. It was the speech in which Sir E. Knatchbull used the phrase *nusquam tuta fides*. It appealed to the feelings of the House, who were carried away by the expressions of the speaker.

"The right hon. Gentleman was obliged to get up and notice it; but he did not notice that passage; he never denied that he had proposed to Lord Liverpool, in 1825, that something should be done respecting the Catholics, though Sir Edward Knatchbull had repeated that statement. No, Sir, the right hon. Gentleman *admitted his guilt*, if guilt it were; and it is only in 1846 that he vindicates himself by referring to a different speech, and quotes a report which I have proved is not a correct one." *

This certainly was very strong proof; not satisfied, however, with this, Mr. Disraeli made another hit:—

* *Ibid.* 531-2.

"Now, sir, I have a right to speak of that report of the speech I have read from Hansard, as being corrected by authority, for I find a note—and every one knows how seldom one finds notes in Hansard—on the 5th of March, 1829, appended to the beginning of the right hon. Gentleman's speech, in these words, 'Inserted with the permission and approbation of Mr. Secretary Peel.'" *

Those last words, which seemed to drive the last nail in Peel's coffin, were received with wild cheers by the Protectionists.

Mr. Disraeli went on to add another link to his chain of evidence; he produced a report from the *Times*, and this report also contained the words of admission which appear in the "Mirror of Parliament;" so that there was the evidence of *two* reports, and not that of one, in favour of the statement that Peel had used the words of fatal admission.

And, finally, Mr. Disraeli brought another important fact forward:—

"Now, in the *Edinburgh Review* of April, 1829, in an article on the state of parties, written, I believe, by a man who was not to be misled with respect to transactions in which he had himself taken a great part, this is the language used:—

"'Sir R. Peel at that time told Mr. Canning, in the House of Commons, that his unlooked-for opposition to Mr. Canning was grounded on a difference of opinion on the Catholic question; yet at that very

* *Ibid.* 532.

time he had in his writing-desk a letter in which two years before he had told Lord Liverpool, in his opinion, the Catholic claims ought to be granted, and proposing that he should retire from office in the meantime.'" *

And then, summing up the reply of Peel to the charge of Bentinck, Mr. Disraeli thus characterised it:—

"He came to these extracts, which I have proved to be garbled. He came with a *suppressio veri* unprecedented in the debates of this House." †

Mr. Disraeli wound up his speech with a eulogium of Canning:—

"I never saw Mr. Canning," he said, "but once, when I had no expectation of ever being a member of this House, but I can recollect it but as yesterday when I listened to almost the last accents—I may say the dying words—of the great man. *I can recall the lightning flash of that eye, and the tumult of that ethereal brow:* still lingers in my ear the melody of that voice. But, sir, when shall we see another Mr. Canning?—a man who ruled this House as a man rules a high-bred steed, as Alexander ruled Bucephalus—(a laugh)—of whom it was said that the horse and the rider were equally proud." ‡

Did anybody ever read a better specimen of what the Americans call "high-falutin'," than this elaborate eulogium? But the vulgar gaud of the language is the smallest fault of this passage. Its great fault is

* *Ibid.* 533-4. † *Ibid.* 535. ‡ *Ibid.* 536.

that it is utterly insincere: that reverence is affected, emotion pumped up, to stimulate the passions of a blindly excited and stupid party.

I think this criticism is justified by the passage itself, without going outside it. But I have further proof than this to show the insincerity of the eulogium; I have the evidence of Mr. Disraeli's own words.

In the passage quoted, he speaks of having heard Canning once. Now, I find another account of this occasion, an account written years before the session of 1846, when Mr. Disraeli's impressions of it were much fresher:—

"I like a good debate; and, when a stripling, used sometimes to be stifled in the gallery, or enjoy the easier privileges of a member's son. I like, I say, a good debate, and have no objection to a due mixture of bores, which are a relief. I remember none of the giants of former days; but I have heard Canning. He was a consummate rhetorician; *but there seemed to be a dash of commonplace in all that he said, and frequent indications of the absence of an original mind. To the last, he never got clear of, 'Good God, sir!' and all the other hackneyed ejaculations of his youthful debating clubs.*" *

Where, can the reader guess, does this passage occur? Why it occurs in a book written by Mr.

* Edition of 1831, iii. 171-2. A few lines further on, Mr. Disraeli writes, in reference to the House of Commons and Canning: "Many a sneer withers on those walls which would scarcely, I think, blight a currant-bush out of them; and I have seen the House convulsed with raillery which, in other society, would infallibly settle the railer

Disraeli; it occurs in the "Young Duke." The Young Duke" was published in 1831: that is to say, when Mr. Disraeli had no reason to exaggerate. Could any two descriptions of the same man be more diverse than those of 1831 and 1846?

Mr. Disraeli's speech wound up with this vigorous peroration:—

"The tone and temper of this House are not as elevated and brave as in the days of Mr. Canning;

to be a bore beyond all tolerance. Even an idiot can raise a smile. They are so good-natured, or find it so dull. *Mr. Canning's badinage was the most successful, though I have listened to few things more calculated to make a man gloomy. But the House always ran riot, taking everything for granted, and cracked their universal sides before he opened his mouth.*"—*Ibid.* 172-3. If we want further proof of the disingenuousness and insincerity of Mr. Disraeli's attack on Peel, we can find it; and, again, the evidence is supplied by the words of Mr. Disraeli himself. Writing in "Coningsby" on this very question of the relations of Peel and Canning, he says, "It may not only be a charitable but a true estimate of the motives which influenced him," Peel, "in his conduct towards Mr. Canning, to consider *that he was not guided in that transaction by the disingenuous rivalry* usually attributed to him." "His statement in Parliament," goes on Mr. Disraeli, "of the determining circumstances of his conduct, coupled with his subsequent and almost immediate policy, may, perhaps, leave this a painful and ambiguous passage in his career; *but in passing judgment on public men, it behoves us ever to take large and extended views of th ir conduct,* and previous incidents will often satisfactorily explain subsequent events, which, without their illustrating aid, are involved in misapprehension or mystery." ("Coningsby," 79. Fifth edition.) Thus calmly can Mr. Disraeli write about a question upon which he pretended afterwards to be scarcely able to speak with self-control! Where are the choking emotion, the overpowering sorrow, the *sæva indignatio* of the speech on the Canning episode in the House of Commons? And mark, too, with what tranquillity Mr. Disraeli can write on the Canning episode after the occasion for using the memory of Canning for party purposes had passed away: "The truth about the question which so conveni-

nor am I surprised, when the vulture rules where once the eagle reigned. The right hon. Gentleman once said that Ireland was his great difficulty. I ask the right hon. Gentleman why Ireland was his great difficulty, and whether, if he had acted with frankness to Mr. Canning in reference to his communication with Lord Liverpool in 1825, Ireland would have been his great difficulty? This the right hon. Gentleman must feel at the present moment, when we are about again

ently occasioned this interesting episode in the debates on the Coercion Bill appears to be this: that Sir Robert Peel, in 1829, having to make a complicated and very embarrassing statement respecting his change of opinion and policy with regard to the Roman Catholics, and to refer by dates to several periods, both as to his positive and his contingent conduct upon that subject, conveyed by some expressions a meaning to the House of a very perplexing character and quite different from that which he intended; that the reporter of the *Times* caught the sentence and although it was inconsistent with the reputation of Sir Robert Peel perhaps imperfectly preserved it; that the reporters of the other journals, not comprehending the remark and deeming it quite incongruous and contrary to received impressions, omitted it, as under such circumstances is not unusual; that Sir Robert Peel, when he corrected the version of his speech, which he did from the report of the *Times*, finding a sentence which conveyed a false meaning, and which was authorised by no analogous expressions in the other papers, very properly struck it out; that the reporter of the *Times*, who, after due comparison and consultation with the reporters of some other principal journals, prepared with them the matured version for the 'Mirror of Parliament,' adhering to his text with the general concurrence of his colleagues, and thus embalmed the error. Perplexing as it is, we have no doubt that the speech of Sir Edward Knatchbull can be explained to the entire vindication of Sir Robert Peel; the solution of this, however, as far as we are concerned, must be left to Œdipus, with a full admission that though Lord George Bentinck was perfectly justified in making the particular charge which he advanced, *it was without real foundation.*"—*Life of Bentinck*, 284—286. "Let us sympathise with the sorrows we do not feel!"

to divide on an Irish question—a division which may be fatal to the continuance of his power. It is Nemesis that inspires this debate, and dictates this division, and seals with the stigma of Parliamentary reprobation the catastrophe of a sinister career." *

Rarely has there been a more successful speech. It was interrupted at almost every sentence by frantic cheers, and when Mr. Disraeli sat down, he received an enthusiastic ovation.

Its effect on Peel was—it may be said without exaggeration—terrible; and it completely broke his chance of support from any of the Protectionist party.

"The minister," writes Mr. Disraeli, "rose confused and suffering. He said he had no right to reply, but continued to make deprecatory and feeble observations. Finally, he called upon the House to 'suspend their judgment,' until an opportunity for reply came." †

"The House," continued Mr. Disraeli, "adjourned until Thursday. The general opinion was that the minister was greatly damaged, and that had the division then taken place, the Government would certainly have been in a minority." ‡

On Friday—Mr. Disraeli's speech had been delivered on Monday—Sir Robert Peel made his reply. The Minister began by complaining, reasonably enough, that he had, in the midst of overwhelming official business, to search among papers and journals in

* Hansard, 3 S. lxxxvii. 537.
† "Life of Bentinck," 271.
‡ *Ibid.*

reference to a transaction that had taken place nineteen years before.

He then gave the most emphatic denial to the statement that he had in 1825 announced to Lord Liverpool a change in his opinions on the Catholic question. And he proceeded to give proofs that he could not possibly have done so. First, he showed from Hansard what his action and pronouncements on the Catholic claims had been in 1825. He showed that, when in February of that year Sir Francis Burdett brought forward a motion in favour of the Catholics, he spoke in opposition to the principle of the Bill.* The motion of Burdett having passed by a considerable majority, he proved that he had likewise opposed the second reading; and he quoted a remarkable passage from his speech on that occasion, in which, alluding to the change in another member's opinions, he distinctly declared that no such change had taken place in him.†

The second reading of the Bill passed; and its third reading was again opposed by Sir Robert Peel. He

* These are the words used by Sir R. Peel in 1825, and quoted by him in this speech of 1846 :—

"Without dwelling on the objections as to the time at which this motion was proposed, or its present expediency, *he openly announced his objection to its principle.* He should, therefore, pursue the course which hitherto he had uniformly persisted in, and give his decided opposition to the measure."—Hansard, 3 S. lxxxvii. 694.

† These were his words : "Mr. Secretary Peel said he had heard, and with the most perfect conviction of his sincerity, the avowal of the hon. member for Armagh, that he had changed his opinions upon it. If he (Mr. Peel) had changed his own opinion, he should

quoted a passage from the speech he made justifying this opposition.

Then he asked:

"After such declarations publicly made in Parliament, is it probable that I could have gone to the Earl of Liverpool, and informed him that my opinion on the Roman Catholic question had undergone a change, and that I was prepared to acquiesce in the concession of the Roman Catholic claims?"*

The third reading of the Catholic Bill, notwithstanding Peel's opposition, having been carried, he offered his resignation to Lord Liverpool. Lord Liverpool, who was equally opposed to the concession of the Catholic claims, urged him to remain; and the Bill having meantime been rejected by the House of Lords, he consented.

Sir Robert Peel next quoted a speech antagonistic to the Catholic claims, which he had made in the House of Commons—in this same session of 1825, of course—*after* he had had his interview with Lord Liverpool.†

have been most ready to avow it; but *as he had not changed it*, he trusted that his hon. friends would give him the same credit for purity of motive in retaining it, that he gave to the hon. member for Armagh in abandoning it."—*Ibid.* 695.

* *Ibid.*

† "On that occasion, after my interviews with Lord Liverpool, I took part in the discussion; and this was the language I held on the 26th of May, in reference to a speech made by Mr. Brownlow in the course of the debate:—'His hon. Friend now seemed to expect an apology from him for continuing of the same opinion. His hon. Friend thought it necessary to call upon him to explain why he too was not converted by the evidence of Dr. Doyle, telling him that the cause was hollow, that the ground was utterly untenable. Now,

This speech was delivered in the presence of Mr. Canning: "Is it probable," says Sir Robert Peel, "I again ask, that I should have held that language in the presence of Mr. Canning, and in the face of Parliament, if I had told Lord Liverpool that my opinion on the Catholic question was changed? I imposed no restrictions of secrecy as to my communications with Lord Liverpool. Mr. Canning was as much in Lord Liverpool's confidence as I was—probably still more, and I have not a doubt that Mr. Canning was perfectly aware of what had passed, namely, that I had expressed an earnest wish to be relieved from the responsibility of office under the circumstances in which I found myself placed."*

Sir Robert Peel then went on to deal with the charge of having in his possession a letter that showed he had intimated a change of opinions to Lord Liverpool in 1825. He first observed that few letters passed between them, their communications being mostly verbal. He pledged his honour that he could find among his papers but three letters from Lord Liverpool during the year 1825. The first of those letters pointed to

he admitted that if his hon. Friend felt the ground untenable, that was a sufficient reason for his abandoning it. He admired his hon. Friend's sincerity; *and, if he himself had felt the same motives, he would have followed the example of his hon. Friend, and defied all attacks for so doing.* But he would beg to be allowed still to occupy ground which he did not feel untenable. He would beg to be allowed, with those who thought with him, to continue of the same mind, seeing that the same light had not broken in upon them which had broken in upon his hon. Friend.'"—*Ibid.* 696.

* *Ibid.* 697.

a state of relations quite opposite to that argued for by Sir Robert Peel's enemies:* the second was unimportant; and the third also tended to prove that Peel had made no such intimation to Lord Liverpool as that with which he was charged.

Next, Sir Robert Peel dealt with the other branch of the indictment against him. "Though I made no such communication as that supposed to Lord Liverpool, did I in 1829 declare that I had made it?" This charge also Sir Robert Peel "positively" denied.†

Then, Sir Robert Peel discussed the reports containing the alleged admission, which had been quoted against him. He admitted his surprise when Mr. Disraeli was able to quote words, containing such an admission,

* "In March, 1825, I had been in a minority on the motion of Sir F. Burdett. There were rumours that Lord Liverpool had himself changed his opinion on the Roman Catholic question. It was most material for me to ascertain whether such were the case or not; because if Lord Liverpool's opinions were changed, and I was in a minority in the House of Commons, there were additional reasons for my retirement from office. I received from Lord Liverpool, on the 10th of March, 1825, this letter:—"(Private.)—Fife House, March 10th, 1825.—My dear Peel,—I return the report of the Irish Association. *I have thought it quite necessary, in consequence of the paragraph in the* Morning Chronicle *of this day, to send an article to the* Courier, *contradicting the reports in circulation respecting any change in my sentiments upon the Roman Catholic question.*—Ever sincerely yours, LIVERPOOL."—*Ibid.* 699.

† "This second charge against me is to the effect, that in 1829 I made a statement, and afterwards garbled the speech in which the statement is alleged to have been made. Says the hon. Gentleman the member for Shrewsbury, 'I am making no charge against the right hon. Gentleman; but I say that his is a mutilated, a garbled, or, to use the softer language of this House, a mutilated report.'"—*Ibid.* 701. When Sir Robert Peel made this quotation from the speech of Mr. Disraeli, a member interrupted him, ex-

from the "Mirror of Parliament," and his still greater surprise when Mr. Disraeli was able to confirm the report in the "Mirror" by a like report in the *Times*.*

But, then, Sir Robert Peel proceeded to show, and proved beyond all dispute, that these apparently separate reports were really one and the same. He proved that the "Mirror" had no staff of its own in the House, that its reports were made up, just as the reports in Hansard are made up to a considerable extent, even to the present day, from a comparison of the reports in the different daily papers. The report in the "Mirror" was simply a copy, and not a confirmation of the report in the *Times*.

Then Sir Robert Peel put a very awkward question

claiming "corrected," meaning that Mr. Disraeli had used the word "corrected," and not "mutilated," as Sir Robert Peel quoted. Sir Robert Peel made a good point, and was justified in making a good point, of this interruption. "(An hon. Member, 'corrected.') Well, 'corrected.' The variation in the reports as to that expression only shows that too much confidence cannot be placed in them; and yet twenty years after the events have taken place I am to be condemned on account of discrepancies in newspaper reports."—*Ibid.*

* "The hon. Gentleman"—Mr. Disraeli—"began by stating that he adverted to the subject with the deepest pain . . . . and the hon. Gentleman came down on Monday night, I having no conception whatever of what was about to occur, and, professing that he approached the subject with great pain, stated also that he had been making careful inquiry, and had found that there was an independent body of reporters, reporting for the 'Mirror of Parliament,' not connected with the public press. The hon. Gentleman has a connection with the press that enables him to speak with some authority on these points. I heard his statement, and it struck me, as it struck others, that evidence of concurrence between two independent and separate authorities was strong, if they had made the same report."—*Ibid.* 702.

to Mr. Disraeli. "As you have had the discretion," he said to that gentleman, "to refer to the report in the *Times*, and have informed the House that it is concurrent with that in the 'Mirror of Parliament,' have you had the discretion to examine other reports also?" Then Peel proceeded to show that there were, in addition to the *Times*, four other morning papers in London, "with separate and independent reports." "There were four other papers: as you hunted up the report in the *Times*, I ask the question, Did you examine the others?"

And then he put this dilemma to Mr. Disraeli: either that he had not read those reports, or that, having read them, he kept back the result; in other words, that he had been guilty of a piece either of reckless carelessness or vile misrepresentation. For not a single one of the other four morning papers agreed with the *Times;* not a single one contained the words on which Mr. Disraeli's attack was founded! *

* *Ibid.* 703. "Now I put this question to the honourable Gentleman,—As you have had the discretion to refer to the report in the *Times*, and have informed the House that it is concurrent with that in the 'Mirror of Parliament,' have you had the discretion to examine other reports also? There were other morning papers at that time, for which there were separate and independent reports; and as you took the precaution of referring to one, and, finding an apparent concurrence, have informed the House of that fact, and have concluded that there was no necessity for further evidence, allow me to ask if the same sense of justice has induced you to examine the other reports? Did you look at the reports in the *Morning Chronicle*, the *Morning Herald*, the *Morning Post*, and the *Morning Journal* [a paper which was set up to destroy the hopes of the success of Catholic emancipation]? There were four other papers; as you hunted up the report in the *Times*, I ask the question, Did you

And, then, Sir Robert Peel proceeded to read from the reports in the different papers named. *Not one of them*, as he had asserted, contained the words upon which the whole charge against him was based.

Finally, Sir Robert Peel dealt with the apparent confirmation in the speech of Sir E. Knatchbull of the report in the "Mirror of Parliament." That speech was made, in the first place, by Sir E. Knatchbull about a fortnight after the speech of Sir Robert Peel. Is it not likely that Sir E. Knatchbull would, in preparing an important speech, have refreshed his memory by referring to a report of Sir Robert Peel's speech. "Might not," asks Sir Robert Peel, "Sir Edward Knatchbull have seen the report in the 'Mirror of Parliament,' and drawn his inferences from that report?"*

Moreover, Sir Robert Peel pointed out that the passage quoted from Sir Edward Knatchbull by Mr. Disraeli did not occur in the reports of Knatchbull's speech in the report of the *Times*, *Morning Herald*, or of the *Morning Journal*.

"Now, Sir," said Sir R. Peel, in conclusion, "I have gone through, one by one, the charges which have

examine the others? If you did not, how came you to limit your caution and discretion to the production of *the only report* that seemed to give a confirmation to your charge? If you did examine the others, why did you not, in common honesty, *admit the discrepancy they exhibit?* Why did you not, in justice to me, state that which is the fact—namely, *that each report of the four other newspapers, all made by separate and independent reporters, altogether exclude the words on which this imputation is founded?*"

† *Ibid.* 708.

been brought against me. . . . . Oppressed with public business, I have had to devote two or three days to the collating and contrasting of newspaper reports, of speeches delivered many years since, for the purpose of rebutting charges founded upon such an authority, preferred seventeen years after the transactions in question took place. I trust I may venture to assert I have succeeded in vindicating myself; and yet, considering the difficulty in which I was placed, how possible it is that I might have failed! I might not have been able to have proved my case so completely."*

And then Sir Robert Peel devoted a few words of scathing and just scorn to Mr. Disraeli:—

"The hon. Gentleman concluded his speech by a passionate representation of his veneration and affection for the memory of Mr. Canning; and at a fitting time, and in a fitting manner, these are feelings which are to be held in respect. The hon. Gentleman described Mr. Canning as an eagle; he spoke of him as the rider of Bucephalus. One would have supposed that he had devoted all the energies of all his intellect to magnify the praises of Mr. Canning, and that he had submitted to some great personal sacrifice on account of his devotion to Mr. Canning. Why, Sir, if he had those feelings, they are to be held in honour; but if the hon. Gentleman is parading those feelings of veneration for the memory of Mr. Canning for the mere purpose of wounding a political opponent, he is

* *Ibid.* 709-10.

desecrating feelings which, when sincere, are entitled to esteem and respect. So far from succeeding in his purpose of inflicting a blow upon me, he is rallying around me public sympathy; and exciting public indignation at the time chosen for this attack, and the motives which led to it." *

Anybody who has read even with slight attention this debate will see that never did a man acquit himself more completely of any charge than did Sir Robert Peel of the charge brought against him by Lord George Bentinck, and the gentleman who was not ashamed to act as his squire. So the House, too, felt. Lord John Russell had "no hesitation whatever in stating" his "opinion that the right hon. Gentleman is not guilty of that which, had he been guilty of it, would have been a flagrant offence; and that he has completely justified himself." †

Lord Morpeth (afterwards Earl of Carlisle), another of the Whig leaders, "must do the right hon. Baronet the justice to say that he thought the case attempted to be substantiated against him (his own words were the best to employ) had been 'completely shattered.'" ‡

And Radical members spoke in a similar manner.

Mr. Hume "had witnessed with deep regret the whole course of these attacks on the right hon. Baronet, and particularly the conduct of the party in persevering, notwithstanding the triumphant answer of the right hon. Baronet." §

* *Ibid.* 710-11.
† *Ibid.* 734.
‡ *Ibid.* 751.
§ *Ibid.* 750.

Mr. Roebuck "assured the right hon. Baronet that although he might have felt pain that any noble Lord should have made such a charge, his answer had been triumphant; but it was unnecessary." *

Even Mr. Disraeli himself is compelled to write, "There never was a more successful explanation." †

Yet will it be believed that Lord George Bentinck had the indecency—Mr. Disraeli calls it "courage" ‡—to stand up and repeat his vile and unfounded charges. This is the man who talked about maintaining "the chastity of his honour"!

However, the storm of unreason, prejudice, and mean passions, which Mr. Disraeli had helped to raise, overwhelmed Sir Robert Peel. The division on the second reading of the Coercion Bill took place on Thursday, June 25, when 219 voted for, and 292 against the Bill. The Ministry were, therefore, defeated by a majority of 73. § On the following Monday they resigned.

* *Ibid.* 730.

† "Life of Bentinck," 279.

‡ *Ibid.*

§ For the amusement of the reader—perhaps it may create some other feeling—Mr. Disraeli's description of this celebrated division is appended:—

"At length, about half-past one o'clock, the galleries were cleared, the division called, and the question put. In almost all previous divisions where the fate of a Government had been depending, the vote of every member with scarcely an exception had been anticipated: that was not the case in the present instance, and the direction which members took as they left their seats was anxiously watched. More than a hundred Protectionist members followed the minister; more than eighty avoided the division, a few of these, however, had paired; nearly the same number followed Lord George Bentinck. But it was not merely their numbers that attracted the

I have now finished my account of the relations of Sir Robert Peel and Mr. Disraeli.

I have had to deal with two different periods, the period when Mr. Disraeli was at peace, and the period when Mr. Disraeli was at war with Sir Robert Peel.

I have shown that as long as Mr. Disraeli had anything to hope from Sir Robert Peel, he poured upon him the most abject flattery; that whether writing in newspapers or in works of fiction, whether speaking on the hustings or in the House of Commons, Mr. Disraeli was never tired of sounding the praises of Peel, and professing his own devotion to him.

On the other hand, we have seen that Mr. Disraeli, when he had lost all hope from Peel, was as lavish in abuse as he had been formerly in praise. In the

anxious observation of the treasury bench as the Protectionists passed in defile before the minister to the hostile lobby. It was impossible that he could have marked them without emotion: the flower of that great party which had been so proud to follow one who had been so proud to lead them. They were men to gain whose hearts and the hearts of their fathers had been the aim and exultation of his life. They had extended to him an unlimited confidence and an admiration without stint. They stood by him in the darkest hour, and had borne him from the depths of political despair to the proudest of living positions. Right or wrong, they were men of honour, breeding, and refinement, high and generous character, great weight and station in the country, which they had ever placed at his disposal. They had been not only his followers but his friends; had joined in the same pastimes, drank from the same cup, and in the pleasantness of private life had often forgotten together the cares and strife of politics. He must have felt something of this, while the Manners, the Somersets, the Bentincks, the Lowthers, and the Lennoxes, passed before him. And those country gentlemen, 'those gentlemen of England,' of whom, but five years ago, the very same building was ringing with his pride of being the leader—if his heart were hardened to Sir Charles Burrell, Sir William Jolliffe, Sir Charles Knightley, Sir

session just described we have seen this system of attack reaching its climax and receiving its reward. The reader has now all the material complete for forming a judgment of the motives and conduct of the opposition to Sir Robert Peel, which Lord George Bentinck and Mr. Disraeli led. I believe I am justified in saying that never was any opposition to any minister conducted with less scruple. I have shown, I think, that no trick was deemed too low for use, that personal vituperation was employed to an extent that nothing could justify, and that vile charges were made against the minister without any foundation, and urged without any decency.

And, again, I ask the reader not to forget the great central fact of this controversy: that Sir Robert

John Trollope, Sir Edward Kerrison, Sir John Tyrrell, he surely must have had a pang when his eye rested on Sir John Yarde Buller, his choice and pattern country gentleman, whom he had himself selected and invited but six years back to move a vote of want of confidence in the whig Government, in order, against the feeling of the court, to install Sir Robert Peel in their stead. They trooped on: all the men of metal and large-acred squires, whose spirit he had so often quickened and whose counsel he had so often solicited in his fine conservative speeches in Whitehall Gardens: Mr. Bankes, with a Parliamentary name of two centuries, and Mr. Christopher from that broad Lincolnshire which protection had created; and the Mileses and Henleys were there; and the Duncombes, the Liddells, and the Yorkes; and Devon had sent there the stout heart of Mr. Buck—and Wiltshire, the pleasant presence of Walter Long. Mr. Newdegate was there whom Sir Robert had himself recommended to the confidence of the electors of Warwickshire, as one of whom he had the highest hopes; and Mr. Alderman Thompson was there, who also, through Sir Robert's selection, had seconded the assault upon the Whigs, led on by Sir John Buller. But the list is too long; or good names remain behind."—*Life of Bentinck*, 298—300.

Peel endured all these attacks in a right cause. Events, as everybody now knows, have realized his predictions. A potato blight *did* occur in Ireland; thousands *did* die of starvation; and the repeal of the Corn Laws *has* made enormous additions to the welfare and happiness of the English people.*

Let the reader remember also that I have proved, on the evidence of facts, and of, I believe, unanswerable arguments,—also on the evidence of rivals,—that Sir Robert Peel was justified in conferring this great blessing of Free Trade on the country.

And, therefore, I say in all this controversy, justice, truth, the welfare of the people, were arrayed on the side of Sir Robert Peel; and injustice, falsehood, and the greed of the few on the side of Mr. Disraeli.

Let us not be carried away by the fact that, in a

* The full wickedness of Mr. Disraeli's conduct in opposing Free Trade cannot be properly realised without endeavouring to recall the state of terrible distress to which Protection had reduced this country in the years preceding 1846. I have not space to go into the subject; but the reader will find full details upon it in Mr. Ashworth's interesting volume, "Cobden and the League." I extract a statement or two from the speeches quoted in that book. According to Mr. Edward Akroyd, the number of persons seeking outdoor relief in Halifax had increased between the years 1838 and 1842 *by* 130 *per cent.* (89.) In the Poor Law Union of Bolton, according to Mr. Henry Ashworth, speaking in 1842, *out of* 90,000 *persons*, 13,000 *were receiving parish relief.* (90.) In Leeds, according to Mr. Bright, there were in 1843, 40,000 persons subsisting on charity; and in Sheffield, no less than 12,000 paupers. (227.) It was to maintain this condition of things that Mr. Disraeli attacked Peel: he was at the same time the enemy of the Minister and the friend of the starvation of the English people. Is that the reason the English people admire him?

personal sense, Sir Robert Peel for the moment failed, and Mr. Disraeli for the moment succeeded. Let not our judgment be warped by the fact that Mr. Disraeli helped to break up a great party, and to overthrow an all-powerful minister; nor by the fact that he played a great game with great skill.

Mr. Disraeli did play for high stakes: and Mr. Disraeli played well. But I have shown the motives with which he entered on the game. The sublimity of the stakes cannot exalt the meanness of his passions.

CHAPTER XII.

PROTECTIONIST LEADER.

The fall of Peel produced a curious state of parties in the House of Commons. The Protectionists, considering themselves as supporters of the existing Whig Ministry, sat on the Liberal benches; and the Conservative Opposition consisted solely of those members who had supported Peel in abolishing the Corn Laws. The position of the Ministry was thus a strange one. The Conservatives, if they could act together, still, of course, formed an overwhelming majority; and therefore the existence of the Ministry was wholly dependent on the continuance of the split between the Protectionists and the Peelites.

Lord John Russell was not long in proposing a measure which put the disposition of the House to the test. He proposed the abolition of the protection given to the sugar grown in the British colonies over that grown in other countries. Lord George Bentinck at once led the opposition to the measure, and he was seconded by Mr. Disraeli. Bentinck proposed an amendment, the effect of which was that the proposed reduction

would give an unfair advantage to foreign and slave-grown sugar over sugar cultivated by free labour in British possessions. Sir Robert Peel, however, strongly supported the Government, and on a division Lord George Bentinck's amendment was rejected by a majority of 265 to 135 votes.

This defeat, however, is to some extent to be regarded as a triumph for Mr. Disraeli. There was a danger that a party, which the hate of Peel had combined, might melt away when the object of that hate had ceased to hold high place. Members of a party have a wonderful readiness to forget in the cold shade of opposition the offences of their leaders when in office. The desire to get back again to power, and its rewards, overcomes personal grievances and private feelings ; and thus a leader, whom his party has expelled from office, by that very fact sometimes regains its allegiance.

The possibility of a return to the former relations between Peel and his Protectionist followers was, however, the great thing against which Mr. Disraeli had to guard. The restoration of Peel to Conservative confidence meant the eternal relegation of himself to that dreary parliamentary Limbo of clever speakers who never reached office. The proposal of an amendment by Lord George Bentinck to the Sugar Duties Bill, and the support of the Ministerial measure by Sir Robert Peel, widened the split between the Protectionists and their late chief, formed the Protectionists into a distinct party with distinct principles, and confirmed Mr. Disraeli's position as a parliamentary leader.

There is nothing further in his conduct during the remainder of the session of 1846 which calls for particular comment.

At the beginning of the session of 1847, another and a still more advantageous change to Mr. Disraeli was made in the position of the Protectionist party. As I have said, the Protectionists had sat on the Liberal benches during the last months of 1846. It had, however, according to Lord Beaconsfield,* been represented to them that this arrangement caused considerable inconvenience. The Protectionists were so numerous that they crowded out the Liberal members from the Liberal benches, and thus much confusion arose. "This led," writes Lord Beaconsfield,† "to some conversation between the Treasury bench and Lord George Bentinck, and it was finally agreed that on the whole it would be more convenient that on the meeting of the House in 1847, he should take the seat usually occupied by the leader of the Opposition, and that his friends should fill the benches generally allotted to an adverse party."

Lord Beaconsfield, it will be observed, speaks of the matter in a rather easy tone; but this incident was, undoubtedly, one of the most momentous in his whole career. The Protectionists, from being a mere parliamentary section, was transformed into the Conservative Opposition; and the change in Mr. Disraeli's position was correspondingly great. Sitting now on the front Opposition bench, he was established as one of the chiefs of the second great political party, and registered a

* "Life of Bentinck," 371-2. † *Ibid.*

certain title to take his seat in due time on the Treasury bench opposite. He became a Cabinet Minister *in petto*. It is singular to remark how fortune has favoured Lord Beaconsfield in so many ways above other men. Here, by a strange and unprecedented combination of circumstances, he was placed in a position without any of the preliminaries through which nearly every other English statesman of the old or the modern time has had to pass. He sat on the front Opposition bench as the leader of a party, and was an heir to high office before he had filled even the most subordinate governmental situation.

The attitude of the Protectionists to the Government during the session of 1847, continued to be that of friendly but close critics. There was one occasion, however, on which they came into open collision, and it appeared quite possible that Lord George Bentinck and his lieutenant would be called upon to assume the reins of Government. The chief topic of discussion during the session was the fearful distress in Ireland, and the means which the Ministry had taken to relieve it. Lord George Bentinck met the scheme of the Government by a counter-scheme. His proposal was that the State should lend £16,000,000 for the construction of Irish railways. For some reason or other, the Bill was allowed to be read a first time ; but when the moment came for the second stage to be taken, Lord John Russell declared that the carriage of the measure would involve the resignation of the Government. The Protectionist leader, amid some professions of reluctance,

real or feigned, accepted the challenge; declared he was "not appalled" by the difficulties of the position of a Minister; and that he and his friends would "not shrink from any responsibility which, unsought, may be forced upon us."*

The debate lasted for three nights, during one of which Mr. Disraeli made a long speech in defence of the proposal of his chief. Ultimately, the Bill being opposed both by the Peelites, by the Liberals in a body, and by a portion of the Protectionists, was rejected by the overwhelming majority of 332 to 118 votes.

This defeat was not lost on Bentinck and his adviser; and during the rest of the session they avoided any direct test of strength with the Government. It was evident that the time was not yet ripe for the Protectionists.

The Protectionist chiefs took up a somewhat strange attitude on the foreign policy of the Government. These were the days of the Spanish marriages, which resulted in the hapless reign of Queen Isabella, and her final expulsion from the throne. Lord Palmerston, who was then at the head of the Foreign Office, vehemently opposed this infamous act of Machiavellian traffic; and his conduct received the censure of Lord George Bentinck and Mr. Disraeli. They were quite unable to see that those marriages were a violation of the Treaty of Utrecht; that they in any way concerned England; and Mr. Disraeli went even so far as to express surprise that Lord Palmerston had not sent a con-

* "Life of Bentinck," 389.

gratulatory letter on the union of Isabella and Francis de Assisi!*

The conduct of Bentinck and Mr. Disraeli was even more curious on the question of Cracow. By one of the articles in the Treaty of Vienna, Cracow had been guaranteed independence. In November of 1846, however, the three Powers, which had been parties to the original partition of Poland, agreed to destroy this last remnant of Polish independence; and Austria, with the consent of Russia and Prussia, annexed Cracow. Lord Palmerston severely blamed the transaction, and entered a protest against it; the subject was mentioned in the Queen's Speech; and on the 4th of March, 1847, Mr. Hume proposed a vote of censure on the conduct of the three Powers.

The action of the Ministry was so plainly justified by the facts that it received the hearty support of Sir Robert Peel.† The motion of Mr. Hume was seconded by Lord Sandon,‡ one of Peel's colleagues in the late Ministry; and so staunch a Conservative as Lord Mahon spoke strongly in favour of the Foreign Secretary's action.§ These very circumstances were probably the reasons which induced Mr. Disraeli to persuade Bentinck to oppose Lord Palmerston. It was part of the general plan of keeping the Protectionists, as a party, separate from all others, and especially from Sir Robert Peel.

It is not necessary to follow the many debates which

* See Hansard, lxxxix. 107 and 150-51.
† Annual Register, lxxxix. 172.
‡ *Ibid.* 167.
§ *Ibid.* 170.

took place on economical subjects. Suffice it to say that in all the discussions on those matters Lord George Bentinck re-echoed the most ignorant and most popular fallacies. He denounced the abolition of the Corn Law, at one moment, because it lowered the price of corn, and so defrauded the English farmer ; and in the very next breath he found fault with this same measure because it made wheat dear in Ireland.* He reflected the prejudice of our grandmothers against what used to be called "engrossers, and regraters, and forestallers," and almost suggested that they should be hanged;† and, altogether, spoke in all the self-sufficiency of Cimmerian ignorance. It is amusing to watch the yeoman service Mr. Disraeli performs to his dullard chief. He utters—the feeling soul, who wanted to keep up a starvation law—the old cant as to the heartlessness of political economy, much as though one were to tax astronomy with callousness ; and he declares that nothing can be more ridiculous than to govern states in accordance with principle. ‡

* Hansard, lxxxix. 246—250.

† *Ibid.* 247.

* As a specimen of Mr. Disraeli's rhetoric, I give the following passage. "The hon. member for North Lancashire," said Mr. Disraeli, "seems annoyed that my noble friend should have expressed a feeling adverse to forestallers and regraters, and talks of such a feeling being a feeling that existed in barbarous days. It is very true that it was 600 years ago that statutes against forestallers and regraters were passed. But what does that prove, when you hear expressions adverse to those clauses at this moment, but that there is a strong national feeling opposed to that system? And I tell this to the hon. Gentleman, that all his philosophy will not be successful when opposed to the national conviction!"—Hansard, 3 S. lxxxix. 259. As a specimen of the kind of wit which sometimes proves

Parliament was dissolved in July, and Mr. Disraeli once again sought a new constituency. He left Shrewsbury, and stood for Buckinghamshire. It is not hard to understand why he should have sought the representation of this latter constituency. He had passed a considerable portion of his youth in that county, at his father's house at Bradenham. It was in a Buckinghamshire town that he made his first attempts to get into Parliament. In his character of farmers' friend, too, it would be more appropriate that he should represent a county constituency. And, finally, Buckinghamshire had associations with great statesmen of the past, which might be turned in some way to the honour and glory of Mr. Disraeli. Indeed, with characteristic modesty, he did not fail in his election speeches to couple his name with that of Burke, who had lived at Beaconsfield, and of Hampden, who had represented the county. The address to the Buckinghamshire electors is characteristic enough. One of the chief dogmas in the creed he professes it is not particularly easy to understand; and, indeed, it is a very good

effective in the House of Commons, I append this other passage in the same speech. "I, for my part," said Mr. Disraeli, "am convinced that the hon. Gentleman himself is not a forestaller. I feel persuaded the hon. Gentleman is not a regrater. I am sure the hon. Gentleman is not a regrater. I am sure the hon. Gentleman is not a great capitalist who has invested his capital in corn. But I tell the hon. Gentleman this, if those sentiments had been expressed by one in such a situation, the speech would not have been forgotten by the people of England. And when the right hour arrives, he will find that his principles of political economy will be subjected to a kind of criticism he will not find within the walls of this House."—*Ibid.* lxxxix. 260

specimen of the system of giving sounding and at the same time unintelligible watchwords, which he has so studiously adopted in leading his party. "In that great struggle," he says, "between popular principles and liberal opinions, which is the characteristic of our age, I hope ever to be found on the side of the people and of the institutions of England." I have read with some care the many speeches in which he further developed this new political dogma, and am still puzzled as much as ever to know what it means.

But the really important point in this election is the attitude of Mr. Disraeli to Protection. Whether he ever really believed in that doctrine or not, he may be credited with sufficient sense to see that, if abolished, it could never be restored. He knew, of course, that the people having once got the taste of cheap bread, would rise in rebellion rather than again allow its price to be artificially raised by protective laws. The difficult problem which Mr. Disraeli had, therefore, to solve was, to keep up his appearance of a belief in the possibility of a return to Protection, and at the same time gradually pave the way for abandoning Protection. This is the game which he plays for the next few years, and I think the reader will not be wholly unamused in watching the skill, the audacity, and the unscrupulousness with which he played it.

The first move was made at this Bucks election, and it took the form of deprecating any immediate attempt to reverse the Free Trade legislation of 1846. Reminding the electors in his address, he says, "during the

recent assault on the protective system" he had offered "a faithful though fruitless opposition to that project." He went on, however, to add that he was not "one of those who would counsel, or who would abet, any attempt factiously and forcibly to repeal the measures of 1846."*

This thesis, that an immediate return to Protection was impossible, he enlarged on during his many election addresses; taking care, however, be it remarked, to hold out at the same time the hope that what was impossible for the moment, would be possible by-and-by.†

It is this that constitutes the dishonesty of Mr. Disraeli's action. The harm he did by keeping alive these hopes which he knew to be false is incalculable. It induced lethargy in both the landlord and the tenant,

* *Bucks Herald*, May 29, 1847. This address is signed simply "Disraeli." It is possible that the "B." is omitted by a printer's error, though this is not very likely. Even in his forty-third year, and in his high political position, he had not given up the silly affectation of his youth with regard to his name. This is a small matter, certainly, but in these trifles, we know, the real character of the man is often portrayed.

† Thus, in one of his speeches, he described Free Trade as "a resolution of Parliament;" "and," he proceeded, "we must see the experiment fairly tried." "You are," he says to the electors, "in the position of a man who has made an improvident marriage. You have become united to Free Trade, and nothing can divorce you except you can prove the charmer has been false. . . . You have become united to a false duenna, and you must take the consequences; and the consequence I venture to predict will be, that the House of Commons, after a fair, full, and ample trial of this great measure, will be driven to repeal it from absolute necessity, though at the termination of much national suffering; but then that suffering will be compensated for by the bitterness and profundity of national penitence."—*Bucks Herald*, June 26 1847.

and throughout the entire community it kept up a dangerous feeling of uncertainty. Equally immoral was the conduct of Mr. Disraeli when viewed in its effects upon the position of parties. If the hope of a return to Protection were abandoned, there was no reason why the estrangement between Peel and the main body of his former followers should still be kept up: this determination to reverse the legislation of '46 was the single point upon which he and they differed. But if this hope of restoring Protection were illusory, then a party was allowed to exist which had no basis, and those who continued its leaders, professing to believe this basis firm, were guilty of the worst of false pretences. I call attention to the point here, because it will be found of considerable importance in studying some subsequent phases in Lord Beaconsfield's political career as a Protectionist leader.*

The result of the election was that, the other candidates having withdrawn, Mr. Disraeli, Mr. Du Pré, and Mr. Cavendish were returned without opposition.

* Not the least interesting feature in this election are Mr. Disraeli's personal encounters with some of his opponents. One of the rival candidates was a member of the Cavendish family, and the services this family had rendered to the Liberal cause were adduced as a reason for supporting Mr. Cavendish. Thus Mr. Disraeli replies to this argument: "I am not disposed for a moment to admit that my pedigree is not as good and even superior to that of the Cavendishes; but as he and his representative have chosen to narrow the question to that issue I accept the ground on which he is prepared to fight. Let him pride himself on his blood; I have confidence in my brains—(loud cheers and laughter)—and I am not alarmed as to the result. This I can tell the silent candidate and his too loquacious champions, that if he appeals to ancestry, I have a father, more than eighty years

There was some, but not a very great, change in the position of parties in the new Parliament. The Protectionists "maintained their numbers, though they did not increase them;"* the Peelites and the Radicals were somewhat diminished; the Whigs alone had added to their ranks.† During the recess there had occurred one of those panics which periodically overwhelm the English money market. In the month of September alone fifteen large London houses stopped payment, the Governor of the Bank of England being a partner in one of these firms. Important houses in the provincial cities were obliged to submit to the same fate, and on the 1st October the interest on money was at the rate of sixty per cent.‡ The Ministers, in consequence, were obliged to resort to the usual remedy in these cases—they authorised the suspension of the Bank Charter Act of 1844. As a result of this permission to

of age, who is a freeholder of the county of Buckingham, and who intends to record his vote for his son when the day of election arrives."—*Bucks Herald*, June 26, 1847. And here is another passage which shows how high his hopes had become at this time: he is answering the charge that he is the nominee of the Duke of Buckingham. "This is a position where a candidate is allowed to speak of himself; . . . . and I say it would be totally impossible that I should fulfil the career to which I hope I am destined, if the opinion of any individual is to influence my conduct. I would much sooner remain the representative of those honest burgesses who first sent me to Parliament, ... *if I were not master of my own career, and if I could not lead instead of following.*"—*Ibid.* Be it remarked that these words were uttered while Bentinck was still alive, and still the nominal leader of the Opposition. Were they not meant to tell Bentinck that Mr. Disraeli was not to be second to him or any other man? Did Mr. Disraeli contemplate an intrigue against his nominal chief?

* "Life of Bentinck," 442. † *Ibid.* ‡ *Ibid.* 443.

infringe the law, they were obliged to summon Parliament in November. Mr. Disraeli took, in the session commenced at that date, perhaps a more important part than he had hitherto played in Parliament. From a mere guerilla warrior, distinguished only by bitter personal attacks, he came to be regarded as the exponent of the principles of a party; and it will be seen, too, that he ventured to make some claims, though in a very cautious and timorous fashion, to being so considered.

Scarcely had the session begun when he had the very difficult but to him not unusual task of reconciling two diametrically opposite votes on practically the same question. Among the first measures introduced by Lord John Russell was a Coercion Bill for Ireland, which bore a very close resemblance to the memorable Bill brought in on the same subject in 1846 by Sir Robert Peel. The reader has not forgotten that it was by a coalition of Whigs and Protectionists against the Coercion Bill of 1846 that Sir Robert Peel was driven from office. Mr. Disraeli, however, was enthusiastic over the Bill of Lord John Russell. He attempted to justify the inconsistency, but his reasons were so flimsy as not to justify my wasting time in examining them.*

At this point, I have to stop to notice an episode which would have made havoc of Mr. Disraeli's political fortunes, if he had been an ordinary man—ordinary, in the sense of having the usual allowance of independence and delicacy of feeling. Untroubled,

* See Hansard, 3 S. xcv. 356—358.

however, by these weaknesses, Mr. Disraeli, it will be seen, turned this episode to his own great advantage.

Among the representatives who had been returned at the General Election for the city of London, was Baron Rothschild. Up to this time, the oath which members of Parliament were obliged to take contained the words "on the true faith of a Christian," and the point in dispute was whether Baron Rothschild should be admitted without being compelled to subscribe to this form of oath. On the 16th December, Lord John Russell brought the subject before the House by proposing a resolution removing the disabilities of the Jews. This action threw the Protectionist party into a state of utter confusion. The vast bulk, being naturally enough as narrow-minded and bigoted in religious, as they were stupid in commercial questions, denounced the proposed reform with all the bitterness and rancour which religious fanaticism can so abundantly beget. I have not space here to quote the flowers of eloquence, at once ludicrous and blasphemous, with which the Inglises, the Ashleys, and the Newdegates graced their opposition to Lord John's resolution. Suffice it to say that the question was evidently one upon which the Tory Rump would accept no compromise.

It would be interesting indeed if we could by some process obtain an accurate photograph of Mr. Disraeli's feelings while, sitting as the leader of these men, he listened to the words of contumely and imbecile bigotry with which they spoke of his race. His disposition was not a very tender or generous one, to begin with;

for no man of tender or generous nature could have written "Vivian Grey" in his twenty-first year. But whatever small remnant there may have been left of softness in his character, these insults and this folly would have annihilated. We do not admire Lord Beaconsfield because he has sacrificed every principle of honesty, of honour, of fair-dealing, to gratify his ambition as a man, and his hate as a Jew; but, almost more contemptible is the conduct of those men who, hating and persecuting his race to the very last moment, were yet mean-spirited enough to accept his leadership. Another reflection that naturally suggests itself to one's mind in connection with this episode in Lord Beaconsfield's career is that it does not speak very highly for his spirit that he should cast in his fortune with the party which thus regarded the people from whom he sprang. What would be thought of the Roman Catholic who was a constant and faithful adherent of the Tory party, while that party was continuing its bitter and uncompromising hostility to Catholic emancipation?

It is true Lord Beaconsfield supplies a ready answer to all such fault-finding with his conduct. "No, Grey; make them fear you," he makes one of his characters exclaim in his earliest novel, "and they will kiss your feet." Lord Beaconsfield resolved to stoop before these insolent patrons, that he might afterwards have the pleasure of making them fear him.

But the difficulty with regard to Mr. Disraeli was not the only one in which the Protectionists were placed

by this Jewish question. Lord George Bentinck, their other leader, was likewise in favour of the Emancipation of the Jews. Amid all the errors and darkness of his Tory maturity, he still retained a relic of the days when he was the private secretary of Canning. He was still an advocate of religious toleration. Thus the position of the two Protectionist leaders was in many respects the same ; it will be a most instructive thing—one of the most instructive in the whole career of Lord Beaconsfield—to observe the manner in which the two men acted in the same difficulty.

First, then, let us take the conduct of Bentinck. "As there are very few Englishmen," writes Lord Beaconsfield,* "of what is commonly called the Jewish faith, and as, therefore, it was supposed that political considerations could not enter into the question, it was hoped by many of the followers of Lord George Bentinck that he would not separate himself from his party on this subject, and very earnest requests and representations were made to him with that view. He was not insensible to them ; he gave them prolonged and painful consideration ; they greatly disquieted him. . . . . He was entreated not to vote at all ; to stay away, which the severe indisposition under which he was then labouring warranted. . . . Enfeebled by illness, he had nearly brought himself to a compliance with a request urged with affectionate importunity, but from which his reason and sense of duty held him aloof. After long and deep and painful pondering, when the hour arrived, he rose from his

* "Life of Bentinck," 511-12.

bed of sickness, walked into the house of commons, and not only voted, but spoke, in favour of his convictions."

This story, although told by Lord Beaconsfield, is literally true, as after-events tragically prove ; and I must say that, much as I dislike Bentinck's opinions, poor as is the respect I have for his abilities, though I consider him to have been a man of narrow and untrained mind, of ungoverned passions, of contemptible prejudices, I cannot, in the face of such evidence, deny him the merit of being in some respects a gentleman in feeling and in principle. And this opinion is confirmed as I read further on in the pages of Lord Beaconsfield, as follows :—

" This vote and speech of Lord George Bentinck no doubt mortified at the moment a considerable portion of his followers, and occasioned great dissatisfaction among a very respectable though limited section of them. . . . Lord George did not take any pains to ascertain whether the representation which was made to him was that of the general feeling of a large party, or that only of a sincere, highly estimable, but limited section. He was enfeebled and exhausted by indisposition ; he often felt, even when in health, that the toil of his life was beyond both his physical and moral energies ; and though he was of that ardent and tenacious nature that he never would have complained but have died at his post, the opportunity of release coming to him at a moment when he was physically prostrate was rather eagerly seized, and the world suddenly learned at Christmas, with

great astonishment, that the renowned leader of the Protectionist party had relinquished his trust."*

Just one touch more to fill in the picture :—

"Parliament reassembled," writes Lord Beaconsfield, "on the 3rd of February, and on that night Lord George Bentinck brought forward his motion for 'a select committee to inquire into the present condition and prospects of the interests connected with and dependent on sugar and coffee planting in her majesty's East and West Indian possessions and the Mauritius, and to consider whether any and what measures can be adopted by parliament for their relief.' When he entered the house Lord George walked up to the head of the second bench below the gangway on the opposite side, and thus significantly announced that he was no longer the responsible leader of the Protectionist party."†

"Look here upon this picture and on this—
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers."

I have said that the position of Lord George Bentinck and that of Mr. Disraeli was the same ; and so it was to a very considerable extent ; but there were some differences in the circumstances of the two, and these differences are most material. Lord George Bentinck, it is true, was bound to the cause of the Jews by a vote he had already given on the question ; and it would therefore have been inconsistent of him to have opposed their claims now. But the vote had been given so far back as 1833,‡ and parliamentary history is rich enough

* "Life of Bentinck," 513-14.
† *Ibid.* 523.
‡ *Ibid.* 508.

in instances of mortal sins in political inconsistency, by the side of which Bentinck's abandonment of the Jews would have been a comparatively venial offence. If he had only studied the career of the friend who was then the sharer of his counsels, Bentinck might have well been emboldened to take a step of far more shameless tergiversation. Besides, as we have seen, the demands made upon him on this question by his friends were not very large. As we have been told by Lord Beaconsfield, it would have satisfied them if he had abstained from voting. But Bentinck would not accept this easy refuge : on the contrary, he insisted on taking his own course in the most ostentatious and, to his followers, most offensive way.

The position of Mr. Disraeli was very different. It was known that he was a member of the race which was still excluded from the ordinary rights of citizens by his own party. His position was, therefore, much more delicate and much more awkward than that of Lord George Bentinck. Any reason which might have urged Bentinck to surrender the leadership of the Protectionist party ought to have weighed with a hundredfold force in the same direction on Mr. Disraeli. Let us see what Mr. Disraeli did.

In the first place, let us mark the manner in which *he* spoke of those who spoke so disrespectfully of him and his. In one of the passages which I have just quoted, the section of poor bigots for whom a Christian of any pretensions to breadth of mind can scarcely find words contemptuous enough, are described by this man

of the Jewish race as "a sincere, highly estimable" section. In his speech to the House of Commons, the address of Lord Ashley (now Lord Shaftesbury), one of the bitterest opponents to the emancipation of the Jews, is spoken of as "the noble speech of the noble Lord." *

More than this: in a speech which he delivered at a later period of the session he actually blamed Lord John Russell for having brought forward the question at all.†

And now, finally, let me contrast the action of Lord George Bentinck and Mr. Disraeli with respect to the

* Hansard, 3 S. xcv. 1323.

† Lest I should appear to misrepresent Lord Beaconsfield on this most important point, I give his exact words: "But I have a charge against the Government, as far as the conduct of public business is concerned, for their not having carried the repeal of the navigation laws. If the subject is of such urgent importance as to be the first recommended in the Queen's Speech, why was your project introduced so late as the 15th May? I will tell you how it was,—because the noble Lord, when Parliament met, chose to introduce a Bill, to which he devoted all the strength and energies of the Government, on a subject which was not introduced into Her Majesty's Speech—the Jewish Disabilities Bill. The noble Lord knows full well that as far as my opinion of that measure are (*sic*) concerned I am making no imputation upon the noble Lord for bringing it in. I gave to the noble Lord, at no ordinary sacrifice, my support upon that occasion; but though I agree with the noble Lord as to the principle which animated his legislation, I do not at all approve of his conduct as manager of the House of Commons. My opinion is, generally speaking, that upon all subjects of that kind—the emancipation of Catholics, and the like—it is not advisable that a Minister should bring forward a project of change unless he is able to carry his measure. I believe the evils are great of a Minister failing in measures of that kind: the failure imparts a party spirit and a party

leadership. I have already described, in the language of Lord Beaconsfield himself, the public manner in which Bentinck signified his abdication as Chief of the Protectionists. Let us consult the same high authority as to what Lord Beaconsfield did :—

"It was the wish of the writer of these pages," he says, in his "Life of Bentinck," * "who had resolved to stand or fall by him" (Lord George Bentinck), "to have followed his example, and to have abdicated the prominent seat in which the writer had been unwillingly and fortuitously placed ; but by the advice or rather at the earnest request of Lord George Bentinck this course was relinquished as indicative of schism, which he wished to discourage ; and the circumstance is only mentioned as showing that Lord George Bentinck was

bitterness to subjects in which party business at all events, and party spirit as little as possible, should mingle. Besides, it is an imprudent and impolitic course with regard to those whose interests you advocate, because, when the Minister is defeated, the cause always goes back. It is known that the battle has been fought under the most favourable auspices, and you always find a reaction. It is very different if you are in Opposition. If the noble Lord had been in Opposition, he would have been perfectly justified, from his position, from the opinions upon religious disabilities which he has always most ably upheld, in bringing the subject before the House year after year, to see whether, by fresh cogency of logic and increased brilliancy of rhetoric, he could make an advance in the House and in the country, and, in fact, to gauge the progress of the question. I think, in the position of the First Minister of the Crown, he was not justified in bringing forward a measure of this kind unless he had a moral certainty of passing it. But it is quite clear that his bringing in the Jewish Disabilities Bill, and pressing it forward, prevented his carrying the repeal of the navigation laws, and, so far as his conduct of the business of the Session was concerned, was a great mistake."—*Hansard*, 3 S. ci. 689—691.

* 523-4.

not less considerate at this moment of the interests of the Protectionist party than when he led them with so much confidence and authority." Of course, of course; Mr. Disraeli having once got to a good place, was not going to be easily removed: such over-delicate considerations might be left to have their influence with beings of less superior mould.*

This will perhaps be the proper place to examine the grounds upon which Lord Beaconsfield advocated the admission of his own people to the franchise. It is a question which he discusses in more than one place. He deals with it not only in his speeches in Parliament, but also in his novel of "Tancred," published about this time. Indeed, that work has almost for its leading subject the relations of Judaism and Christianity; and let me say that I must dismiss the book with this casual observation. But the Jewish question is dealt with more closely and intelligibly in a chapter in the "Life of Bentinck," than in any other place, and it is with the representation of the question there put forward that it will be most convenient for me to deal.

The whole tendency of Lord Beaconsfield's argument is that Judaism and Christianity are practically the same

* It is scarcely necessary to notice the insinuation that Lord Beaconsfield was "only induced to maintain the leadership by the persuasions of Lord George Bentinck." Lord Beaconsfield is not the man to be persuaded into any course he does not think to his interest, and he does not require much inducement to retain a position which gratifies his vanity and advances his ambition. Lord Beaconsfield might have been satisfied with using Lord George Bentinck as his catspaw when living, without likewise making him when dead the sponsor for some of his most questionable acts.

thing. He speaks* of the morality of the two religions being identical. Manini is "a Jew who professes the whole of the Jewish religion." "A converted Jew," goes on Lord Beaconsfield, "as the Lombards styled him, quite forgetting in the confusion of their ideas that it is the Lombards who are the converts—not Manini." † In the next page he deplores that "several millions of the Jewish race should persist in believing in only a part of their religion," ‡ and so on.

I do not know whether it is necessary that I should attempt to dispose at any length of these representations. It is quite plain, in spite of all Mr. Disraeli's sophistry that the Jew and the Christian are separated from each other by a doctrine of overwhelming importance. Christ to the Jew—I mean, of course, the orthodox Jew—is an impostor, but to the Christian a belief in the divinity of Christ is the very basis of all his doctrines, a necessary part of his morality in this life, and, in the eyes of many believers in Christ at least, an indispensable requisite for his happiness in the next. What more fundamental difference can there be between religions than the difference as to who is their God? But Mr. Disraeli is so oblivious, or pretends to be so oblivious, of this distinction, that he actually claims credit for the Jews for committing that act which, in the eye of the orthodox Christian, must always be regarded as an inexpiable crime.

"If the Jews," he writes, "had not prevailed upon the Romans to crucify our Lord, what would have

* "Life of Bentinck," 487-8. † *Ibid.* 498. ‡ *Ibid.* 499.

become of the atonement? . . . . The immolators were preordained, like the victim, and the holy race supplied both. Could that be a crime which secured for all mankind eternal joy?" *

Passing on from the question of doctrine, Mr. Disraeli flies into the region of the incomprehensible. In "Tancred," he speaks of a great Asian mystery, and to this day the world is asking in vain what this great Asian mystery is. In the life of Bentinck, the great Asian mystery is transformed into the Semitic principle. "The Jews represent the Semitic principle; all that is spiritual in our nature."†

"Destruction of the Semitic principle," he says, in another place, "extirpation of the Jewish religion, whether in the Mosaic or in the Christian form," ‡ are said to be the cause of the recent disturbances. "The great transatlantic republic," he further informs us, "is intensely Semitic, and has prospered accordingly." "This sacred principle alone has consolidated the mighty Empire of all the Russias." In Rome, according to Lord Beaconsfield, an "old man, on a Semitic throne, baffles the modern Attilas," and Austria "would long ago have dissolved but for the Semitic principle." §

I must dismiss this part of Mr. Disraeli's exposition with the candid confession that I really do not know what it all means. I cannot even see what was his object in writing it, except the general one of so mysti-

* *Ibid.* 488.
† *Ibid.* 496.
‡ *Ibid.* 497.
§ *Ibid.* 509.

fying people as to make them blind to the real question at issue.*

This treatment of Jewish questions by Lord Beaconsfield partly derives its interest from the light which it throws upon a great deal of his style of dealing with the opinions of men. One of the stratagems which may be traced in all his writings and speeches from the very commencement of his career—and to this I have already drawn attention—is to so mix up opposing principles as to make them appear identical. In his youth he tried to prove that Radicalism and Toryism were the same thing. In 1842 free trade and protection were demonstrated to be synonymous terms. Opposition to the lowering of the franchise and household suffrage were, in due time, also shown to be perfectly consistent; and here, in religion, we have seen how the belief that Christ was an impostor, and the belief that He is God, form exactly the same faith.

I now resume the narrative of Mr. Disraeli's action during the remainder of the session of 1847-8. In all the debates he took a prominent part; and it is clear from the newspaper reports of the period, and from the comments of the other speakers, that he had now an assured position in the House. Yet these speeches, which produced roars of laughter, and were listened to with great interest, are dreary reading nowadays. Their chief

* In this chapter on the Jews, Lord Beaconsfield makes an amusing mistake. He speaks of the crucifixion of our Lord as having taken place "in the reign of Augustus Cæsar" (483; edition 1852). Most people know that the crucifixion took place in the reign of Tiberius.

effect is to lower one's opinion of a popular assembly. Very small jokes produce mighty merriment; appeals, exaggerated to the verge of burlesque, and patently insincere, excite wild and sincere enthusiasm; arguments of the most transparent fallacy, are listened to with approval. The subjects of discussion during this session were principally of a commercial character. Measures were proposed on the Sugar Duties, on the Navigation Laws, and kindred subjects. There is not a single one of those beneficent changes in our restrictive system which Mr. Disraeli did not denounce as fraught with every evil. Events have, as everybody knows, triumphantly refuted these gloomy forebodings of himself and those he led; but perhaps no one laughed more heartily, scoffed more ostentatiously at these falsified predictions of Mr. Disraeli, than Mr. Disraeli himself.

Reading the speeches at this distance of time, you can see that the serious part of his subject was the part in which Mr. Disraeli felt most uncomfortable, and from which he made his escape as soon as possible. For a while, he makes a show of dealing with matters of fact, quotes a number of undigested statistics, and makes a parade of minute commercial knowledge; but then, he is off to a personal attack on Mr. Cobden or Mr. Bright, to a paltry pun on somebody's name, to a thrust at Dr. Bowring, or some other of the House's butts, or to some such easy escape from his own ignorance, and consequent dulness.

The whole effect of Mr. Disraeli's appearances in the

character of a financier is really intensely amusing to anybody who has studied his career. The author of "Contarini Fleming" speaking gravely of the difference beween white and brown sugar, of the tonnage of British vessels at Rio and the freightage at Antigua, of dock duties, raw material, currency, appears to me an irresistibly comic picture; and Lord Beaconsfield's feelings must assuredly have been a mixture of amusement and disgust. It was the Venetian having to speak, in the jargon which he loathed, of the things which he despised, to the northern barbarians, among whom a malign fate cast his lot. A Yankee exploiting North American Indians by imitating their vile tongue, ministering to their coarse passions, and affecting their brutal sympathies, would have probably no deeper contempt for his subjects than our Oriental ruler for the people he rules.

Let me now notice with some slight detail a few of Mr. Disraeli's most remarkable appearances during this session.

On February 18, making a long speech on the Budget, he branched off into a violent attack on Mr. Cobden;* but the only reply the leader of the Free Trade movement made was that he had not found "much" in Mr. Disraeli's speech "necessary to refer to."† Similarly, Mr. Bright's answer to a similar attack on February 28, was a declaration that Mr. Disraeli "boldly and firmly reiterates sophisms with regard to taxation which any weaver in Lancashire

* Hansard, 3 S. xlvi. 953—960. † *Ibid.* 961.

or Yorkshire would be ashamed to utter."* Again returning to the charge against the Manchester school, Mr. Disraeli declared himself a "free trader, but not a freebooter."† He described Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright as the "representatives of two great principles —Peace and Plenty. Yes! Peace and Plenty amid a starving people, and with the world in arms."‡

Mr. Disraeli also took part in some important debates on our foreign relations. In an elaborate attack he made upon the interference of Prussia in Schleswig-Holstein, he found himself in complete agreement with Lord Palmerston.§ In the course of his speech, he has no words of scorn sufficiently vigorous for the principle of nationality. The Chevalier Bunsen is blamed for talking "that dreamy and dangerous nonsense called German nationality."‖ "If," exclaims Mr. Disraeli, "wheresoever the German language is spoken, the German flag should wave, why do not the Germans invade Alsace?"¶ In speaking on the expulsion of Sir Henry Bulwer from Madrid, he condemns in the strongest manner Palmerston's efforts to encourage Liberal institutions in other countries. "You," he said, "look upon the English Constitution as a model farm. You forced this Constitution in every country."** And he also, in the course of this address, expresses horror at Lord Palmerston's not having been more communicative on

* *Ibid.* 1440.
† *Ibid.* xcvii. 417.
‡ *Ibid.* 436.
§ *Ibid.* xcviii. 509—526.
‖ *Ibid.* 521.
¶ *Ibid.* 516.
** *Ibid.* xcix. 398.

foreign affairs to the House of Commons,—"the chosen temple of national right and national honour." *

But his greatest effort was a review of the session, which he delivered on August 30. Lord Beaconsfield has found it necessary to explain the circumstances under which he came to deliver this speech; and some explanation was certainly necessary. By thus undertaking the task of giving a general criticism of the action of the Government, Mr. Disraeli was performing the duty of the leader of the Opposition. But would it not be strange that he should perform this task, while the man he professed to follow occupied the seat of a private member? Does it not look as if Mr. Disraeli were trying to "cut out" Lord George Bentinck? Conscious, perhaps, of these natural and ugly suspicions, Lord Beaconsfield, in his "Life of Bentinck," gives an explanation of his action. According to this explanation, Mr. Disraeli undertook this duty in spite of his own wishes, and only in compliance with Bentinck's most urgent request. He "shrank," he tells us,† "from a laborious effort" "at the end of August;" though from all that has been seen of Lord Beaconsfield, up to this period of his career, "laborious effort" appeared to him no burden when he had a chance of advancing his interests. Besides,—I am still following his explanation,—he did not think "his position in the House of Commons warranted on his part such an interference." ‡ He "therefore unaffectedly stated that he thought the

* *Ibid.* 385. † "Life of Bentinck," 574. ‡ *Ibid.* 574.

office somewhat above his measure."* This part of the explanation is quite as puzzling as the first, or even more so. It is astonishing to find Lord Beaconsfield assuming an air of elegant languor, when he had a great purpose to serve; but it is still more astonishing to behold him in the new guise of the modest questioner of his own merits. I take the liberty of doubting the accuracy of this whole explanation. Mr. Disraeli, we may be sure, was only too delighted to spend any amount of "laborious effort," even at the "end of August," for the profit of standing forth as the protagonist of the Ministry; and instead of modestly fearing the office "somewhat above his measure," he was perfectly convinced that of all beings in the world, he was "the right man in the right place."

However, be the circumstances what they might under which it was delivered, the address of Mr. Disraeli was immensely successful. The Ministry, by their many changes of purpose, and by some mistakes, had laid themselves open to an effective attack by a skilful opponent, and Mr. Disraeli unquestionably made the most of his opportunity. The thrusts at the Ministry were admirably given; the illustrations were extremely happy,—some happier, I think, than anything even in the philippics against Peel; and there was throughout the whole address a riotous humour that must have been almost intoxicating.†

* *Ibid.* 575.

† I can only give one short extract from the speech. "I scarcely know to what to compare their (the Ministerial) conduct, except something that occurs in a delightful city in the south, with which

During the recess, an event unexpectedly occurred which influenced the whole of Mr. Disraeli's subsequent career. On September 21st, Lord George Bentinck fell dead in his brother's park at Welbeck. Thus the Protectionist party were left without a leader, and the appointment of his successor was evidently by no means an easy task. The negotiations which took place upon the subject are hidden in considerable mystery, and though I have perused most of the newspapers of the period, I find nothing like a full story of what took place. Mr. Disraeli was, by his talents and his Parliamentary success, clearly pointed out for the vacant post. He was, indeed, the only man of ability in his party,—for, with characteristic judiciousness, he had chosen a party in which stupidity was predominant. But these large-acred legislators, of long descent, were

hon. Gentlemen are familiar—and which is now, I believe, blockaded and bullied by the English fleet. There an annual ceremony takes place, when the whole population are found in a state of the greatest alarm and sorrow. A procession moves through the streets, in which the blood of a Saint is carried in a consecrated vase. The people throng round the vase, and there is great pressure,—as there was in London at the time to which I am alluding. This pressure in time becomes a panic—just as it did in London. It is curious that in both cases the cause is the same: it is the cause of congealed circulation. Just at the moment when unutterable gloom overspreads the population—when nothing but despair and consternation prevail—the Chancellor of the Exchequer—I beg pardon—the Archbishop of Tarento announces the liquefaction of St. Januarius's blood—as the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced the issue of a Government letter:—in both instances, a wholesome state of currency returned: the people resume their gaiety and cheerfulness, the panic and the pressure disappear, everybody returns to music and maccaroni—as in London everybody returned to business,—and in both cases the remedy is equally efficient, and equally a hoax."—*Hansard*, 3 S. ci. 677.

naturally very averse to raising over their heads a man of but moderate fortune, and of Hebrew origin. His chief rivals for the post were the Marquis of Granby and Mr. Herries; but neither of these could lay claim to it on the ground of intellectual gifts. Mr. Herries had been an official, but he was a dull, plodding, commonplace man; and the Marquis of Granby was also deemed unequal to the position. So far as I can make out, the question of the leadership was not finally settled even when Parliament met in 1849; but there was a sort of arrangement by which it was exercised in turn by each of the three competitors. However, Mr. Disraeli had so far gained his point as to be chosen to propose the amendment to the Address from the Throne on the meeting of Parliament.*

* The *Morning Chronicle*, in its issue of December 16, 1848. speaks of the election of Mr. Disraeli to the leadership as already a *fait accompli*. Having referred to the pretence of the first Napoleon to having been elected to the Imperial Throne by the popular will, the *Chronicle* proceeds: "We cannot help regarding the election of Mr. Disraeli to the leadership of the Protectionists in the House of Commons as an analogical example of what conscious merit and inborn superiority, backed by strong volition and utter insensibility to the ordinary weaknesses of a sensitive or shrinking nature, may effect. We are not, indeed, aware that the dignity in question is typified by any material sign or emblem, like the belt with which the championship of England is conferred, or the whistle which belongs of right to the greatest drinkers of the north. On the contrary, we strongly suspect that Mr. Disraeli's only external sign of authority, or mark of pre-eminence, is a trumpet of his own; and we are quite sure it has never been blessed by the Protestant Pope, Mr. Spooner, at any ceremony attended by the Protectionist magnates—Major Beresford, Sir John Tyrell, Mr. Henley, Mr. Newdegate, Mr. Stafford, and Mr. Bankes. But Napoleon wore his usurped crown so well, and showed himself so admirably qualified for the situation and the emergency, that the French soon became, as they long remained, persuaded that he was

He had good materials for attacking the Ministry, for Lord Palmerston, true to his policy of encouraging in every way Liberal institutions throughout Europe, had intervened in the many conflicts which marked the year 1848. He had interfered on behalf of Hungary against Austria; of Sardinia against the same power; and of Sicily against the King of Naples. As on a previous occasion, Mr. Disraeli utterly condemned all these efforts on behalf of struggling nationalities. He gloried over the success of Austria in crushing the attempt of Hungary to regain her rights. Charles Albert's effort to rescue Lombardy from the dominion of the foreigner was to him mere brigandage, and the King of Naples was a pattern of rulers.* "There wanted," he said, summing up the policy of Lord Palmerston, "but one ingredient in the mess to make the incantation perfectly infernal. A republic

indispensable to them; and on precisely the same principle will Mr. Disraeli very soon become, if indeed he is not already, confessedly indispensable to the Protectionists. . . . They cannot do without him, and, so soon as Parliament meets, he will take his place naturally, and by the mere force of circumstances, at their head." However, the *Times*, speaking on January 30, 1849, two days before the meeting of Parliament, speaks of Lord Granby as being the leader. "The first symptoms," it says, "of the Parliamentary campaign are to be noted in the kitchens of the leaders of party. . . . . There is the official dinner, of Lord John Russell; there is the agricultural Opposition dinner, such as that of Lord Stanley and the Marquis of Granby." Mr. Disraeli's name is not even mentioned in the entire article. The *Morning Chronicle*, too, in its issue of February 3, 1849, two days after Parliament had met, falsifies its own prediction, for it has to "congratulate the Protectionists on their new scheme of a triumvirate leadership in the Lower House—Mr. Herries, Lord Granby, and Mr. Disraeli."

* See Hansard. 3 S. cii. 89—117

without republicans, an empire without an emperor, required only mediations without an object to mediate about: and the saturnalia of diplomacy would mix with the orgies of politics!"*

He was happy in criticising the announcement of the Government that they were about to effect economy in the services;† professed to say that "any well-considered measure for retrenchment" would meet with no opposition from his followers;‡ and concluded with an astonishing piece of exciting and meaningless rhetoric.§

In this session the Government again introduced their scheme for the abolition of the Navigation Laws. Mr. Herries on this occasion performed the function of

* *Ibid.* 103.

† "What," he asked, "is this fresh discovery in the aspect of affairs which enables us to make large reductions? Is it what I read of in the Speech itself—the spirit of disaffection in Ireland? . . . . Is it what I also read of in the Speech—the rebellion of a formidable character in the Punjaub? A possible insurrection in Ireland, or an actual rebellion in India?"—*Ibid.* 108.

‡ "Firstly," he says, "because I believe there is no instance of a well-considered measure of retrenchment which has not been carried into effect by the Tory party; and, secondly, because, faithful to the great traditions of their political connexion, the Tory party will never forget that it is they who were the original opponents of any extravagantly conceived military establishments of this country."—*Ibid* 109.

§ "But," proceeds our patriotic orator, "no gentleman on this side of the House will approach in a light spirit, or touch with a careless hand, the military system of this country as at present established. They will respect that English fleet which is a name more influential with foreign Cabinets than all the resources of our foreign diplomacy; they will not tamper with the English regiment, which has become a name as famous as the Roman Legion."—*Ibid.* 109. Loud cheers, according to the "Annual Register," followed this splendid period of hollow rhetoric.—xci. 13.

leader of the Opposition, and proposed the rejection of the measure. It would be instructive, if I had the space, to quote some of the many wildly false predictions as to the result of this measure which were uttered by the Protectionist speakers. Mr. Disraeli fully echoed all these gloomy prophecies. That is really the irritating part of this man's success,—that on every great question upon which the country has had to decide, he has been egregiously in the wrong; and that if his views had been carried out, the nation would have incalculably suffered. Had he succeeded in staying the adoption of Free Trade, who can estimate the immeasurable misery that the dearness of bread which Protection begot would have inflicted upon the English people? If he had succeeded in his opposition to the repeal of the Navigation Laws, our commerce would not have attained its present splendid proportions. What is the fatal circumstance in politics that blinds men, sensible in other circumstances? A lawyer who loses our case by his blunders is peremptorily dismissed. We have no more to do with the doctor who has misunderstood our ailment. We refuse to pay the architect who has built us an ill-constructed house. But the politician who deals, not with individual lives, but with the lives of millions, can blunder on to the end of the chapter without punishment—nay, oftentimes with reward. If the counsels of the man who is at present our supreme ruler had been carried out, the nation would have been wellnigh ruined; and yet he is an Earl, a Knight of the Garter, one of the

most powerful Premiers of the century. These showy titles deceive the multitude to the real essence of the case: but, ah me! how would a poor shoemaker have fared who had bungled in boot-making as Lord Beaconsfield has bungled in politics?

The most interesting feature, in Mr. Disraeli's action during this session of 1849, is his mode of dealing with the supreme question of Free Trade and Protection. I have already pointed out how, during his Bucks election, he took the first step for abandoning a policy he knew to be impracticable. In this session, and as time went on, he ventured on successively bolder steps in this direction. One of his first and favourite expedients was to persuade the farmer that a change in the incidence of taxation would have practically the same effect as a restoration of Protection; hoping thus to get rid of the cry, which, having advanced him to power, had now become foolishness and a stumbling-block.

On March 8, he brought forward a proposition on local taxation, the general effect of which was that the land paid an undue amount of such taxation, and ought accordingly to be relieved. At the very outset of his speech, he boldly declared that he had no intention of raising the general question of Free Trade or Protection. His argument, and it was a skilful one, was that Free Trade, whether right or wrong, had taken away from the land, to a certain degree, its profits, by exposing its chief product to foreign competition; and that as a necessary

consequence the legislature was bound to give compensation in the shape of reduced taxation. This proposition he argued for the most part with a speciousness that delighted his wondering admirers, and a temperateness that was eulogized from all parts of the House. When, however, he reached his peroration, and had to adopt his usual methods for awaking the enthusiasm of his followers, he complimented the landed interest with the usual insincere extravagance, and denounced the manufacturers with amusingly gross misrepresentation.*

The motion which Mr. Disraeli made on July 2 was still more important. It was a proposal for a committee to consider the state of the nation. He proposed this motion because, he says, "in my opinion, great and general distress prevails in this country;

* Declaring that the landed interest had been deeply offended by the manner in which they had been spoken of, he went on: "They have not forgotten that they have been spoken of in terms of contempt by Ministers of State—ay, even by a son of one of their greatest houses, a house that always loved the land, and that the land still loves. They have not forgotten that they have been held up to public odium and reprobation by triumphant demagogues. They have not forgotten that their noble industry, which in the old days was considered the invention of gods and the occupation of heroes, has been stigmatised and denounced as an incubus upon English enterprise."—*Hansard*, 3 S. ciii. 451. Such is his picture of the agriculturist. Now let us turn to the dark features of the manufacturer. Having first said that the motto of the agriculturists was "Live and let live," he proceeds: "You have adopted a different motto,—you, the leading spirits on the benches which I see before me, have openly declared your opinion that if there were not an acre of land cultivated in England it would not be the worse for this country."—*Ibid.* 452. It is scarcely necessary to pause to say that no manufacturer ever made an assertion so idiotic. But let our orator proceed: "You have, all of you, in open chorus, announced your object

and because I believe that that great and general distress has been progressive since the formation of the present Government."* In other words, Mr. Disraeli proposed a want of confidence motion. This established for the first time his position as the leader of the Opposition. He is recognized as such by several speakers during the debate;† and it is also declared on all sides that the consequence of the carriage of the motion would be the expulsion of Lord John Russell from power, and the substitution of Mr. Disraeli and his friends as successors.‡

to be the monopoly of the commerce of the universe, and to make this country the workshop of the world. . . . But believe me," he goes on, "I speak not as your enemy when I say that it will be an exception to the principles which seem hitherto to have ruled society, if you can succeed in maintaining the success at which you aim without the possession of that permanence and stability which the territorial principle alone can afford. Although you may for a moment flourish after their destruction—although your ports may be filled with shipping, your factories smoke on every plain, and your forges flame in every city—I see no reason why you should form an exception to that which the page of history has mournfully recorded; that you, too, should not fade like the Tyrian dye, and moulder like the Venetian palaces. But, united with the land, you will obtain the best and surest foundation upon which to build your enduring welfare; you will find in that interest a counsellor in all your troubles—in danger your undaunted champion, and in adversity your steady customer."—*Ibid.* 452-3. Would such rubbish be tolerated in any deliberative assembly except the House of Commons?

* Hansard, 3 S. cvi. 1141.

† Mr. Roebuck congratulates Mr. Disraeli "upon this his first appearance as the acknowledged chief of the party."—*Hansard*, 3 S. cvi. 1223. The Chancellor of the Exchequer speaks of the hon. gentleman as "the avowed leader of a powerful party."—*Ibid.* 1173. And Lord John Russell refers to the Protectionists as "the supporters" of Mr. Disraeli.—*Ibid.* 1472.

‡ Mr. Disraeli speaks of his motion as "an earnest and serious motion." "Its object," he adds, "is to turn out the Government

The speech of Mr. Disraeli was very lengthy, but not particularly able. He indicted the whole policy of the Government, foreign and domestic; but the main burden of his address was the fatal effects of Free Trade. At the same time this address is deserving of attention as marking another step further from the orthodox Protectionist creed. In this speech Mr. Disraeli brings forward a novel style of financial legislation, which we know now under the name of reciprocity. He asked that we should meet "hostile tariffs" by "countervailing duties."* It will easily be seen that this new form of Protection is an entirely different thing from that preached by Mr. Disraeli some years before, and still professed by his followers. Protection pure and simple meant that we should impose import duties, no matter what any other country might do. Reciprocity means that our imposition of such duties should depend on the action of other nations. If "hostile tariffs" were to be met by "countervailing duties," then conversely, no "countervailing duties" were to be levied where there were no "hostile tariffs." In other words, we should employ

We may not succeed, but we shall succeed some day."—*Ibid.* 1233-4. Sir Robert Peel, in giving us his reasons for opposing the motion, says: "I cordially approve of the general principles of commercial policy by which Her Majesty's Government have been guided, and that I will not consent to a motion the main object of which avowedly is to censure them for their adherence to those principles, and to substitute in the place of that policy some other economic system."—*Ibid.* 1429-30. And Lord John Russell speaks of the motion as "asking that the present Ministry be displaced, and that a new Ministry be formed on the ground of the restoration of Protection."—*Ibid.* 1472.

* Hansard, 3 S. cvi. 1155.

Protection against those only who employed Protection against us.

The debate lasted for two nights. The best speech was made by Sir Robert Peel, who gave a convincing exposition of the policy of Free Trade, and with perfect calmness and temper examined and utterly destroyed Mr. Disraeli's fallacies.* In fact, so complete was the defence of the commercial policy of the Ministry that Lord John Russell found it unnecessary on this point to supplement the unanswerable speech † of his predecessor in office; while Mr. Disraeli, in winding up the debate,‡ unable to answer the arguments of Peel, replied, after his wont, by a piece of violent personal vituperation.§

* See Hansard, 3 S. cvi. 1429—1462.

† *Ibid.* 1472.

‡ *Ibid.* 1486—1497.

§ There is a general impression, and the statement is usually made in the biographies of Lord Beaconsfield, that his attacks on Sir Robert Peel ceased with the fall of that statesman in 1846. This impression is altogether incorrect. Of course his attacks on Peel were necessarily less frequent, because Peel, not being in power, it was not so necessary for Mr. Disraeli's purposes to assail him. Mr. Disraeli attacked the ex-Premier during the session of 1847. Defending Mr. Ferrand, he spoke of Peel as one whom "too much prosperity had made insane" (577); and his followers were described as a "devoted phalanx"—a "Macedonian army, ready to vote according to his nod." —*Hansard*, 3 S. lxxxix. 577. This, by the way, produced the retort from Mr. Roebuck, that "the conduct of the late Prime Minister was Mr. Disraeli's leading idea. He could not help bringing into every discussion his favourite topic, censure and condemnation of the right hon. Gentleman. This one idea," continued Mr. Roebuck, "he drags into every discussion; and whenever he gets up, be the occasion what it may, he never can sit down till he has had a fling at the right hon. Baronet."—*Ibid.* 581. Referring to Mr. Disraeli's image of the "Macedonian phalanx," Mr. Roebuck reminded him that he had "sat behind

On a division, the motion of Mr. Disraeli was rejected by 296 to 156 votes.

Meantime, the Protectionists outside Parliament were pursuing courses very different from those of their cunning leader in the House of Commons. During the recess, several tumultuous meetings were held, at which there were riots, bloodshed, and the most violent language.* The tone of the Protectionists will be gathered from the harangue of a Mr. Cheetham,†

the Minister—that powerful Minister at whose beck and call the Macedonian phalanx, now rendered so memorable, was prepared to act."—*Ibid.* 580. In the speech referred to in the text Mr. Disraeli thus addressed Sir Robert Peel: "And here I must say, with all respect to the right hon. Baronet, that there is something in his manner when he addresses on these subjects his former companions, which I will not say is annoying, but rather I would style somewhat astonishing. One would almost imagine from the tone of the right hon. Gentleman that he had never for a moment held other opinions on this subject—that he had never entertained a doubt upon it—that he had been born an infant Hercules, cradled in political economy, and only created to strangle the twin serpents of Protection and Monopoly. . . The right hon. Gentleman should view one's errors at least with charity. He is not exactly the individual who, *ex cathedrâ*, should lecture us on the principles of political economy. He might, at least, when he denounces our opinions, suppose that in their profession we may perhaps be supported by that strength of conviction which, for nearly forty years, sustained him in those economical errors of which he was the learned and principal professor. . . . He preached a crusade against the system of commercial reciprocity. . . . Men of great scientific research have investigated and illustrated it; and I believe that it will require more time and discussion than it has yet received in this House, before it can be thrown into that limbo of stale opinions in which the right hon. Gentleman has found it convenient to deposit so many of his former convictions."—*Hansard*, 3 S. cvi. 1494—1496.

* Irving, 172.

† *Ibid.* 173. "The phantoms," said Mr. Cheetham, "of ruined farmers must haunt the sleeping pillow of Sir Robert Peel. Knowing how much he was execrated, he must really move about in fear and

at a Rutland meeting, in which it was declared "that Sir Robert Peel ought to be "afraid of the poniard and the dagger."

This tempestuous agitation, and this passionate demand for the immediate restoration of Protection, proved exceedingly embarrassing to Mr. Disraeli, and he deserves credit for the bold, skilful, although disingenuous way in which he tried to escape from his difficulties. An amendment to the Address was proposed in both Houses of Parliament by subordinate members of the Protectionist party. The amendment raised the question of Protection by declaring that the existing distress in the agricultural districts was due to Free Trade. But there was also tacked on the statement that this distress was aggravated by the pressure of local taxation. This was in complete accordance with the plan of tactics which had been adopted, as has been already seen, by Mr. Disraeli in previous sessions, and exactly suited his purposes. By not raising the question of Protection directly, it

dread. Even if Sir Robert Peel should ever have a majority again, he dared not take office. If he was in Sir Robert's position, he should be afraid of the poniard and the dagger, and so he had a right to." (Here the speaker was interrupted by loud cries of "No! no!") "He should be sorry to say what he did not feel, but he thought he was justified in saying what he had, seeing what a narrow escape Peel once had when he was not so much execrated as now. He believed that Cobden and Peel were travelling the same road. Peel, he was informed, had a strong grudge against the aristocracy, because one of them in the House of Lords once called him a weaver's son. Sir Robert Peel's son need not be afraid of being called a weaver's son, or a weaver's grandson, but he would be called 'the traitor's son.'"—*Irving*, 173-4.

enabled him to ride away from that disagreeable topic; and, at the same time, by raising the question indirectly, it kept up the agitation, which, though occasionally embarrassing, was still necessary to him for the maintenance of a Protectionist party and his leadership of that party.

The difference between the speech of the Protectionist leader, and of the general body of Protectionist speakers, brings out most clearly the peculiarity of Mr. Disraeli's position: while they boldly proclaim that their object and their hope is the restoration of Protection, he over and over again denies that the general question of Protection and Free Trade is involved in the Address at all. On this point he labours at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of his speech on the Address. To raise the general question "may or may not be politic," "may or may not be expedient;" but in his opinion "the amendment upon the Address" is not the "right occasion upon which to test so great a principle." * And again, he declares that the "success or failure of free trade I do not at all consider to be the question to-night, or in any way connected with the amendment." † "I call upon the noble Lord at the head of the Government," exclaims Mr. Disraeli, "to speak frankly on this subject." "Don't let the noble Lord," he continued after this excellent burst, "suppose that this is a party movement; nothing is more convenient for a Government than to contend that the great principles

* Hansard, 3 S. cviii. 221. † *Ibid.* 225.

of free trade are endangered, and that those who are embarrassing them with a Motion, have merely personal considerations at stake. I tell the noble Lord that the time has gone by for those antiquated quibbles; the question is too serious and too earnest." *

There is one sentence more in this curious speech which must be quoted. It is the first direct hint of a disbelief in the full Protectionist gospel. After denouncing Free Trade, and the manner in which it was carried, Mr. Disraeli goes on to say: "But I have ever felt, and I take this opportunity of expressing my conviction, that there never was a mistake greater than supposing the land of England did at any time depend for its fortune on any *artificial law whatever*." †

This speech naturally created considerable astonishment. It "altogether changed the character of the debate," ‡ to use the words of Mr. Cobden, for the leader of the Protectionists thus removed from discussion the general question of Protection or Free Trade. This it did in spite of the numberless and enthusiastic meetings in favour of restoring Protection which Mr. Disraeli had permitted to take place throughout the country; this it did, notwithstanding

* *Ibid.* 231. I must point attention to this last and characteristic passage. All through this speech Mr. Disraeli implies one thing while saying another; He does not once "speak frankly" as to the real object of the amendment, and his address is one long quibble. But with characteristic art, and equally characteristic want of scruple, he implies that the want of candour is on the part of others; that they not he, shirk the real question; that they are the quibblers, not he.

† *Ibid.* 233.

‡ *Ibid.* 246.

that the Government, by putting up Mr. Villiers, the oldest leader of Free Trade in the House, to propose the reply to the Address, had directly challenged discussion; this it did, although several of the Protectionist speakers had accepted the Ministerial challenge. Lord John Russell declared that Mr. Disraeli had utterly confused the House,* and Mr. Cobden administered to this trifler with public interests and passions one of the severest, truest, and most effective castigations in Parliamentary history.†

Mr. Disraeli, however, was not to be moved from his purpose by the appeals from Lord John Russell for more frankness, or from Mr. Cobden for more honesty, and, true to his system of tactics, he proposed on February 19th, a resolution, the effect of which would be to reduce country taxation by about £2,000,000. In his speech introducing the resolution, he attempted to answer the attacks which had been

* *Ibid.* 234.

† "But what has fallen from the hon. Member for Buckinghamshire has altogether changed the character of the debate; he has totally altered the issue of our coming decision. For he has told us the question before us is not the question of protection, or free trade—that we are not on this occasion going to decide whether the principle of protection to native industry is or is not to be the principle of this House. He says that 'it may or may not be' expedient, at some future time, to test the opinion of the House on the subject, but that to-night, no hon. Gentleman who votes, commits himself at all upon the question. I must say it is a very sorry beginning, after so loud a preparation as has been heard throughout the country. . . . . The hon. Member for Buckinghamshire frequently alluded to what has taken place out of this House. The hon. Gentleman out of this House sometimes makes statements of a personal character—sometimes indulges in little invectives and personalities which he does not always like when used by other parties. I remember the hon. Gen-

made upon him for not bringing forward the question of Protection and Free Trade, and his defence was that the House, as then constituted, had plainly shown its intention of not restoring Protection, and that further appeals to it for this purpose were accordingly in vain; and this defence was followed by the important announcement that no such appeals would in future be made to that Parliament.* The remainder of his speech was devoted to proving his theme that relief from burdens on the land would be some compensation for the loss of Protection.

An important debate followed Mr. Disraeli's proposition. It extended over two nights, and nearly all the leading speakers on both sides of the House took part in it. The scheme was opposed by the Government, by Sir Robert Peel,† and by Sir James

tleman, at a meeting at Marlow some time ago, stated that a county meeting was not a proper place for discussing the questions of free trade and protection. Well, here I am on the floor of this House, and not in Buckinghamshire, anxious to argue with him. The hon. Gentleman has talked of every subject except protection to native industry. . . . . If there is any party or any individual in this House who wishes to make protection a stalking-horse to power, without any serious intention of ever attempting to restore it—who could have any such motive as that of hoping for a time—as it could only be for a time, when dealing with so much intelligence as that of the English population—by mystifying this question, and by pretending to advocate protection, when they did not dream of the possibility of ever returning to it—I say that such an individual would be one of the greatest enemies that the British farmer could have; and not merely that, but he would be the greatest enemy to the country at large, because we have all an interest, whether we are farmers or individuals connected with trade or manufactures, in successful operations of agriculture."—*Ibid.* 248.

* *Ibid.* 1028-9. † *Ibid.* 1231—1253.

Graham,* but it had the good luck to be supported by Mr. Gladstone.† This was an important advantage for Mr. Disraeli, for it broke up the solid body of Peelites who had hitherto combined in opposition to all his motions; and this fact, together with some dexterous coquetting with the Irish Liberal members, had the effect of considerably diminishing the majority by which the Government had hitherto defeated all Mr. Disraeli's proposals. On a division, 252 members followed Mr. Disraeli into the lobby, while 273 supported the Government. The majority of the Ministry, accordingly, was but twenty-one, and Mr. Disraeli's defeat was a victory. On several other occasions in the course of the session Mr. Disraeli had an opportunity of insisting on the position he had taken up with regard to the great controversy of Free Trade and Protection. Thus, on May 14,‡ in speaking on a motion of Mr. Grantley Berkeley to impose five shillings duty on all foreign corn, he used some words which, though studiously ambiguous, seemed to indicate that if certain burdens were taken off the land, the agriculturists would be willing to abandon their claim for protection for their corn;§ and he concluded his speech by an emphatic reiteration of his determination not to bring the question of Protection before that Parliament.‖ Mr. Cobden, rising immediately after,¶ endeavoured once

* *Ibid.* 1189—1204.
† *Ibid.* 1204—1214.
‡ *Ibid.* cxi. 81-82.
§ *Ibid.* 85-6.
‖ *Ibid.* 87-8.
¶ *Ibid.* 88—94.

more to open the eyes of the Protectionists and the country generally to the game of duplicity Mr. Disraeli was playing,* and pointed out in a few emphatic sentences the cruelty as well as the absurdity of holding out the hope to the farmers that a new Parliament would, any more than the present, be able to restore Protection.†

Of the many other questions in the discussion of which Mr. Disraeli took a part during the session, it is only necessary to speak of the debate on the foreign policy of the Government, and of the extension of the franchise both in Ireland and England.

On Monday, June 17, a vote of censure on the policy of Lord Palmerston was carried in the House of Lords. Lord John Russell, in reply to interrogations, declared that the Government did not mean to resign because of this vote, and he then made an appeal to Mr. Disraeli which amounted to an official recognition of that gentleman's position as leader of the Conservative party. Lord John argued that as the Conservative leader had brought forward this vote of censure in the House of Lords, it was the duty of the other Conservative leader to bring forward a similar motion in the other house. Mr. Disraeli, however, declined to throw down the challenge, and the question was raised by Mr. Roebuck proposing a vote of confidence in the Ministry.‡ The debate on this motion was most important and interesting. It lasted four nights, and was marked by many strange incidents.

* *Ibid.* 88. † *Ibid.* 93-4. ‡ *Ibid.* cxii. 102—108.

Lord Palmerston defended his policy in perhaps the longest speech he ever delivered. He spoke for several hours, "from the dusk of a summer evening to the dawn of a summer morning," and it was in this speech that he made the famous comparison between the rights of the English citizen and those of the *Civis Romanus*.* But the chief interest of the debate lies in the fact that this was the last occasion on which Sir Robert Peel made his appearance in the House of Commons. Even if he could have foreseen the violent end that was at that moment so near, he could scarcely have appeared in circumstances more worthy of his past, or more calculated to leave a lofty regard for his memory. He had to express agreement in a good deal of the censure which had been cast on the policy of Lord Palmerston; but while doing so, he spoke of the Foreign Secretary himself in the kindliest terms.†

And the speech concluded with a peroration in which were laid down the principles by what the foreign policy of England ought to be guided. These sentences, the last Peel ever uttered in the House of Commons, contain within a short compass the exposition of the truest and best policy which the country could pursue; and

* Irving's "Annals of Our Time," 184.

† Alluding to Lord Palmerston's speech, he said, "I have so little disposition . . . . for entering into any angry or hostile controversy, that I shall make no reference whatever to many of the topics which were introduced into that most able and most temperate speech, which made us proud of the man who delivered it, and in which he vindicated with becoming spirit, and with an ability worthy of his name and place, that course of conduct which he had pursued."—*Hansard*, 3 S. cxii. 688.

the tone in which these wise counsels are given is that of passionless benignity, as of a man who had ceased to be moved by the feverish desires and personal aims of ordinary men.*

In marked contrast to the speech of Peel was that of Mr. Disraeli, who wound up the debate. According to him, it was the duty and interest of England to protect the interests of every other European country. In this speech we have a phrase with which we have become, in more recent days, unhappily familiar. We have the phrase "a great English interest," and the phrase is made to cover almost every event that could possibly happen in Europe. Talking of various changes that had taken place on the Continent, Mr. Disraeli went on: "Now in every instance these dismemberments had

* "It is also my firm belief," said Peel, "that you will not advance the cause of constitutional government by attempting to dictate to other nations. If you do, your intentions will be mistaken—you will rouse feelings upon which you do not calculate—you will invite opposition to Government; and beware that the time does not arrive when, frightened by your own interference, you withdraw your countenance from those whom you have excited, and leave upon their minds the bitter recollection that you have betrayed them. If you succeed, I doubt whether or no the institutions that take root under your patronage will be lasting. Constitutional liberty will be best worked out by those who aspire to freedom by their own efforts. You will only overload it by your help, by your principle of interference, against which I remonstrate—against which I enter my protest—to which I to-night will be no party. You are departing from the established policy of England—you are involving yourselves in difficulties the extent of which you can hardly conceive—you are bestowing no aid on the cause of constitutional freedom, but are encouraging its advocates to look to you for aid, instead of those efforts which can alone establish it, and upon the successful exertion of which alone it can be useful."—*Ibid.* 693.

injured a great English interest." "It was a great English interest" that the north of Italy should belong to Austria. It was a first-rate English interest "that Sicily should belong to Naples," and that the Sound should be in possession of Denmark.* In this speech, too, we have the craze that all continental movements are due to secret societies,†—a craze which seems to have haunted Mr. Disraeli throughout his whole life.

The division took place after three o'clock in the morning; and by a curious coincidence, in this division —the last in which he ever took part—Peel went into the same lobby as Mr. Disraeli.

The sun had risen before Sir Robert went to bed, and he was obliged to rise early, as he had to attend that day, at twelve, a meeting of the Commission of the Great Exhibition. The afternoon he spent in his study till five o'clock, when he went out to take a ride. Passing down Constitution Hill, his horse shied, he fell, was severely injured, and in three days afterwards was dead.‡

This tragic and sudden end to a great and, on the whole, beneficent career, created profound and universal grief. "The multitude of inquiries were so great that policemen were stationed at different places near his house with bulletins, which they were ordered to read to the crowds of all ages, sexes, and conditions that flocked to Whitehall, anxiously inquiring after the chances of recovery of the suffering statesman.

* Hansard, 3 S. cxii. 731. † *Ibid.*
‡ Molesworth's History of England, ii. 344-5.

Never perhaps did the intelligence of any event cause more genuine grief in the country than the news of his death." *

Thus death once more came as a useful ally to Mr. Disraeli at a critical stage in his career. The death of Lord George Bentinck removed the obstacle to his leadership of the Protectionists, and the death of Sir Peel removed the great obstacle to his tenure of office. There can be little doubt that Peel would in due time once more have been called to the head of affairs. During the years which elapsed from the fall in 1846 to his death, his fame stood at its highest. Separated from both parties, and supported by but a small band of followers, he spoke, as a rule, with the impartiality and with the authority of a man free from party ties. Never during his whole career were his words listened to with deeper attention; never did he stand out more prominently as the greatest member of Parliament of his time; and never did he more truly occupy the position of the man who in perilous times, when others had failed, would be called to guide the State. A few months only had elapsed after his death, when the Government of Lord John Russell had reached the lowest stage of impotence, and a strong hand was required once again at the head of affairs. Peel, of course, would have been the man to whom the Queen would have had to apply; it is not at all improbable that he would have been able to get sufficient support from the independent men on both sides of the House

* *Ibid.* 345.

to enable him to carry on the affairs of State; and if he had risen to power once again, Mr. Disraeli's chance of ever ruling this country would have been destroyed.

Among the Bills brought in this session, as I have already indicated, was a Bill for the extension of the franchise in Ireland. How necessary such a measure was is proved by the fact that whereas the proportion of electors in Scotland and Wales varied from 25 per cent., which was the lowest, to 32 per cent., which was the highest, the average in Ireland was 2 per cent.* Mr. Disraeli, after all his professions of justice to Ireland, and his advocacy of the rights of the people, opposed the Bill, which tended to make a slight increase in this paltry number of the voters.† He adopted a similar course when Mr. Locke King brought in, on the 9th July, his motion for an extension of the franchise in England. In the course of this debate, he took good care not to allude to the Radical principles which he formerly professed, but he did not escape without having his memory refreshed upon this now rather troublesome part of his career.‡

* Speech of Lord John Russell, Hansard, 3 S. cx. 1365.

† *Ibid.* 1357—1364.

‡ Sir Benjamin Hall, speaking in favour of Mr. Locke King's motion, asked Mr. Disraeli some pertinent questions. The member for Bucks had, among other things, stated that if he had been in Parliament in 1832 he would have opposed the Reform Bill. "Let me ask him," said Sir B. Hall, "if he was always of that opinion?" Mr. Disraeli, according to Hansard, intimated that he was. Sir B. Hall was as startled as the reader will probably be by such an assertion. If the reader will turn back to one of the earliest chapters of this book, he will find Mr. Disraeli thanking God that the people of

Of the many sessions of the English Parliament which have been utterly wasted, and which have ended without adding a single benefit to the community, perhaps that of 1851 was the most misspent and the most useless. Throughout the whole period of its existence, the two Houses of the Legislature were occupied in discussing a measure which was violated the very day after its enactmeut, and which has remained a dead-letter, with the consent of everybody, from the hour of its passage to the present moment. This was the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, which Lord John Russell introduced with a view to allaying one of the "No Popery" tempests which periodically pass over this country. The session is for the most part taken up with Ministerial defeats and Ministerial crises, the result of the general disrepute into which this Bill

Wycombe had at last got their rights through the Reform Bill. "Will the hon. Gentleman," continued Sir B. Hall, "look my hon. Friend the member for Montrose in the face and say that he has always been of that opinion?" Sir B. Hall under-estimated Mr. Disraeli's powers of looking in the faces of those whose friendship he had gained through political principles he had deserted. "Certainly," was the reply of Mr. Disraeli to Sir B. Hall's question. "Certainly!" exclaimed Sir B. Hall, "why, the hon. Gentleman, who now stands forward as the great champion of Protection, at one time held opinions now entertained by Gentlemen on this side of the House. . . . Did he not go down," went on this inconvenient interrogator, "to the borough of High Wycombe as the *protégé* of the late Mr. O'Connell and the hon. Member for Montrose? Did he not go down under those auspices?" An hon. Member here, according to Hansard, exclaimed, "That's a poser." Then Sir B. Hall alluded to Mr. Disraeli's attempt to represent Marylebone, giving the interesting information that the election address of the future Premier was "concocted" in the house of a tallow-chandler in Crawford Street. Bryanston Square.—*Hansard*, 3 S. cxii. 1181-2. Mr. Disraeli's reply was feeble and evasive. After

brought the Government. Mr. Disraeli took a prominent part in all these debates, which were generally of so futile a character that our record of his acts during this session will be extremely brief. There is another reason for curtailing the narrative at this point. The reader has already seen sufficiently what was the line of tactics which Mr. Disraeli laid down for himself in dealing with his Protectionist followers. His policy, as we have said over and over again, was to divert the attention of his followers from the question of Protection itself to the question of removing the alleged burdens on land. The motions and speeches which he made during the session of 1851 are but a repetition, in somewhat different language, of those which he made on the same subjects during the two previous sessions.

On February 11th, Mr. Disraeli achieved the most

his manner of meeting the charge on previous occasions, he suggested, without actually expressing, false inferences. He did not deny that Hume had given him his support, although he suggested that he had not. "The hon. Gentleman," he replies, "said I went down to High Wycombe with the recommendation of my hon. friend the member for Montrose." Now mark the prevarication of what follows. "Why, sir, I lived in High Wycombe before the Reform Bill. I was bred there, if not born; and it is to my connexion with it that I owe the honour I now enjoy of representing the county." The reader will also not fail to notice that in this passage we have a new revelation as to the place of Mr. Disraeli's birth. It will be remembered that at Shrewsbury he distinctly stated that High Wycombe was his birthplace; here, he gives this merely as an impression.—*Ibid.* 1184. In this same speech Mr. Disraeli used these remarkable words also: "The hon. Baronet has accused me of being the advocate of Parliamentary finality. I disclaim altogether that office. *I have been always opposed to the system of reform; because I hold it to be adverse to the interests of the party with whom I acted: that is all.*'—*Ibid.*

important victory he had yet gained in the House of Commons. His motion in favour of agricultural distress was rejected by 281 votes to 267, or by the small majority of fourteen. Nine days afterwards the position of the Government was still further shaken, for a motion of Mr. Locke King in favour of reducing the franchise was carried, in spite of the opposition of the Ministers, by the large majority of one hundred to sixty-two. The result of these two divisions—one a practical, the other an ignominious defeat—was that on February 24, Lord John Russell announced that the Government were unable any longer to carry on the business of the country, and that they had consequently placed their resignations in the hands of the Queen.

Negotiations went on for several days before it was possible to form a new Government. In the first place, the Queen called on Lord Stanley (the late Lord Derby), and proposed to him that he should form a Government. Lord Stanley, however, suggested that an attempt should first be made, by Lord John Russell and Lord Aberdeen and Sir James Graham, to form a junction between the Peelites and the supporters of the Government. This proposition was accepted by Lord John Russell, and for a short time there appeared some probability of such a junction being formed. On their general policy there was no essential difference between the Ministry and the followers of the late Sir Robert Peel, and they were both agreed as to the supreme necessity of presenting an united

front in favour of Free Trade against the efforts of the Protectionist party to revive Protection. On one point, however, the difference between the two was found to be insuperable. Lord Aberdeen and Sir James Graham were both strongly opposed to the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill—so strongly, that they could not sanction any compromise on the matter; while Lord John Russell was too deeply pledged to continue with the Bill to withdraw it, and thus these negotiations came to an end.* The next suggestion in this crisis was an attempt on the part of Lord Stanley to obtain the support of the Peelites for the Protectionists.

This crisis did Mr. Disraeli great service. It was because of the large support which a motion of his received, that the Government determined to hand in their resignations, and the consequence was that in the negotiations between the Queen and the various leaders, his name was constantly and prominently brought forward. It is pretty clear, however, from Lord Stanley's speech, that Mr. Disraeli was one of the last men to whom he would resort. The statement which Lord Stanley makes upon this part of the transactions, inclines me to the belief that his selection on a subsequent occasion of Mr. Disraeli as leader of the House of Commons was not made by reason of any love for Mr. Disraeli, but from the simple fact that he could get nobody else to take his place. For on this occasion we find him stating that he made application in

* Speech of Lord Aberdeen, Hansard, 3 S. cxiv. 999—1003.

the first instance to Mr. Gladstone,* and, of course, if this was done in the first instance, his object would probably be to give the leadership of the party in the House of Commons to that gentleman.—He then speaks of having applied to other persons,† and, altogether, conveys the impression that he tried everybody before falling back on Mr. Disraeli. I must, for the present, dismiss Lord Stanley's speech with the final remark that he declared his efforts to form a Ministry futile. There were, besides the points I have noticed, an exposition of his policy and of his intentions, in case he took office, which I shall have to notice at some length at a future stage.

* Hansard, 3 S. cxiv. 1012.

† Speaking of his leading supporters in the House of Commons, Lord Stanley describes them as "men of talent and intellect," but without "political experience," and not "versed in official business." —*Hansard*, 3 S. cxiv. 1008. In another passage, he speaks of his attempts to select colleagues in the House of Commons thus: "My Lords," he said, "even among that"—the Protectionist—"party, I found that some of those who were well qualified to discharge public duties, were by various causes induced to decline—one, by the pressure of extensive private concerns; another by disinclination to join an Administration which appeared to hold out no assured prospect of permanence; and a third by an undue depreciation of his own abilities."—*Ibid.* 103. I think, reasoning from the probabilities of the case, it is clear that Mr. Disraeli was not one of the three persons, as described. He was not pressed "by extensive private concerns;" the fact that the Ministry could have "no assured prospect of permanence" did not deter him later on from joining Lord Stanley; and assuredly he is not the person described as suffering from "an undue depreciation of his own abilities." It, therefore, seems probable that, up to this date, Lord Stanley had not come to the determination to join his fortunes so closely to those of Mr. Disraeli, as he afterwards did. Mr. Disraeli, to all appearances, had little to do with Lord Stanley's resolves during this crisis.

The result of the Ministerial crisis, then, was that Lord John Russell resumed office.

Mr. Disraeli's attitude on the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill was quite characteristic. While expressing general dissatisfaction with it, he took very good care to bend before the then no-Popery storm, presenting in this respect a marked contrast to Sir James Graham and Mr. Gladstone, who not only spoke against the Bill, but also had the courage to go into the lobby in opposition to it.

The Government sustained two other important defeats during this session. On June 6 they were defeated on a proposition of Lord Naas in reference to their financial arrangements, and on June 23 Sir Frederick Thesiger carried against them three resolutions in reference to the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill. Thus Government went on during the remainder of the session, sustaining every now and then defeats, and afterwards with some difficulty, by an appeal *ad misericordiam*, obtaining a reversion of the votes to which they objected.

CHAPTER XIII.

MINISTER.

When the Government met Parliament again, its difficulties and its weakness had still further increased. During the recess a dispute had arisen between Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell, the result of which was the dismissal of the Foreign Secretary from office by the Queen, on the advice of the Premier. The point in dispute, on which I need touch but lightly, was that Lord Palmerston had been premature in announcing to the French Government his approval of the *coup d'état* of Louis Napoleon. This event was the *coup de grace* of the Russell Ministry. Lord Palmerston had been its chief strength, and although his policy had been several times attacked, he was universally esteemed as a man of ability, courage, and vigour, who had conferred considerable prestige on the Government. The opening of Parliament was therefore looked forward to with a great deal of interest, and the days of the Ministry were, in the opinion of many, already numbered. The first night of the session was rendered particularly exciting by the

speeches both of Lord John Russell and Lord Palmerston on the events and reasons which had led to the expulsion of the latter from office. The speech which Mr. Disraeli made upon the Address contains nothing remarkable. The best part of it was that in which he twitted Lord John Russell with the futility of the recently enacted Ecclesiastical Titles measure. He was able to show that the provisions of that enactment had been openly and almost ostentatiously violated, and that the Government found themselves unable to interfere.*

Among the bills which Lord John Russell had promised to bring in during the present session was a bill for Parliamentary Reform; and on the 9th February he made his statement with regard to this proposal. As the bill never passed into law, it is unnecessary to go into it at any length. Suffice it to say that the chief proposals were to reduce the qualification in boroughs from £10 to £5, and in counties to £10. The measure was not received with particular favour from any side of the House, the reformers thinking that it did not go far enough, and the Conservatives that it was too advanced. The speech which Mr. Disraeli made upon it was of a most peculiar character. True to the tactics which he had followed on the question of Reform since his entrance into Parliament, he was careful not to pledge himself against making any change in the franchise; but while thus leaving open the way to himself for future retreat,

* See Hansard, cxix. 135—153.

he invariably opposed, on one pretence or another, every Reform Bill brought in by any other party. His speech of this session was but a repetition of the remarkable address which he made on the same subject during the previous session, and which this is the proper place to notice, as it supplies the key to a great part of his future action in reference to this question. Speaking on the bill of Mr. Locke King, he had declared that he entirely protested "against what is popularly understood in a political sense as the principle of 'finality.'" "But," he went on to say, "I do pledge myself to oppose any measure of Parliamentary Reform flagrantly having for its object the returning and confirming in power of some political section, or the displacement of the proper territorial influence and power which, as I believe, constitutes the best security for our liberties, and the best means of retaining the stable and confirmed character which the institutions of the country have preserved."* He adopted the same tactics in the present speech, but what his opinions on the subject really were he so completely managed to hide in a mist of words that it was impossible really to understand what he meant, and Sir George Grey was justified in saying that "he was unable to discover whether" the speaker "was to be numbered among the supporters or the opponents of the bill."†

Before it was possible, however, to discuss the new

* Molesworth's History of England, vol. ii. 360.

† Hansard, 3 S. cxix. 308.

Reform Bill, events had occurred which put an end to its further progress. Recent occurrences in France had once more aroused the apprehensions that aggression on the part of that country was to be feared, and there was a general cry for an increase of our armaments. In response to this popular demand, Lord John Russell brought in a Bill for the establishment of a Militia Force. The bill passed through the first stage without any interruption, or anything beyond the faintest indication of the coming storm. Lord Palmerston, it is true, dissented from the principle upon which it was founded, but he gave no indication that his opposition would be of such a kind as to wreck the measure. But when the bill reached the next stage, Lord Palmerston proposed an amendment embodying his idea of the principle upon which the Militia Bill should be founded. On the division, 136 voted for Palmerston's amendment, and 125 against it, the Government being thus left in a minority of eleven. Lord John Russell immediately rose, and stated that it was impossible that he could go on with the measure,* and hinted that it was time to consider whether he should continue any longer to carry on the affairs of the Government.† The events of the next few days were generally foreseen. It was plain that for a considerable period Lord John Russell had wearied of the position which he held, that he was tired of depending for existence on the support of his opponents, and of such aid being given at one moment

* Hansard, 3 S. cxix. 877. † *Ibid.* 878.

and taken away at the next. In addition to this, the several blunders which he had committed in the course of his administration, had destroyed the prestige of his Government, and the Ecclesiastical Titles Act had brought the dissatisfaction with his Ministry to a climax. It was therefore felt that he was only looking out for an opportunity of retiring from his difficult position. This defeat afforded him the anticipated opportunity; and when the House met on Monday, the 23rd February, he announced the resignation of his Ministry.

When the list of Lord Derby's colleagues was published, the world was at once astounded, alarmed, and amused. It was scarcely credible that the most important affairs of State should be entrusted to the inexperienced and stupid squires whom the Prime Minister placed at the head of the different departments. But, perhaps, the appointment which most startled and most amused the public was that of Mr. Disraeli to the Chancellorship of the Exchequer. Its first announcement at a public meeting was, according to one journal, received with "shouts of laughter,"* and the comments generally of the press alternated between sarcasm at the ludicrousness of Lord Derby's choice, and alarm at its consequences.†

* *Daily News.*

† "It seems," says the *Morning Chronicle* (February 24, 1852), "that Lord Derby has had the incredible rashness to make Mr. Disraeli Chancellor of the Exchequer. Surely it might have been possible to find some less delicate system of machinery than the finances of the country as a subject for such an experiment.' 'Mr. Disraeli," writes the *Times* (February 24, 1852), "certainly

The supposed intentions of the Ministry, however, caused more alarm than the incapacity of its members. The people were possessed with the gloomy foreboding that the old curse of dear bread, which had in times not very remote been the cause of untold misery amongst the poorer classes, was about to return. So real was the danger thought, that the very first words of Lord John Russell, on his resigning office, were, that he considered it one of his foremost duties in opposition to resist any return to Protection. Another step, still more significant of the public alarm, was taken. In 1846, after the Free Trade triumph of Peel, the Anti-Corn-Law League, the most powerful political combination which ever existed in this country, was dissolved; but on the accession of the Derby Ministry

has consulted rather his ambition than his genius in his selection of office." "It is a *mauvaise plaisanterie*," writes the *Examiner* (February 28, 1852), "a plagiarism from *Punch*, a copy of a squib on an abortive attempt last year. The names, with an exception here and there, cannot be read in any society without a laugh; and yet, in reality, it is no laughing matter. For a serious affair there certainly was never anything so comical." Even the friendly *Morning Post* is obliged to confess, of the appointment of Mr. Disraeli, that "it cannot be doubted that such an arrangement was among the least expected of any which it has been our duty to announce" (quoted in the *Spectator* of Feb. 28, 1852). It was at first rumoured that Mr. Disraeli was to be Home Secretary, and in the earlier lists of the Ministry which appeared in the newspapers, his name appears in that capacity. Perhaps it was his original intention to have occupied this post, which would probably have been more congenial to his taste than that of Chancellor of the Exchequer. An able critic in the *Fortnightly Review* suggests, on what authority I do not know, that the reason of the change was that as Home Secretary he would, in his turn, have been obliged to wait upon the Queen, and that Her Majesty at that time had no desire to admit him to this familiarity.—"Political Adventures of Lord Beaconsfield," *Fortnightly Review*, 8.

preparations were speedily made for the revival of that famous union. Meetings were held, subscriptions poured in, and all the old machinery was put in order for conducting the new campaign with the vigour, and on the large scale, which had in former years compelled a Conservative Cabinet to adopt Free Trade principles. Mr. Cobden, at one of these meetings, was careful to point out the reality of the immediate danger. He showed that, by all their former declarations, the Ministry was pledged to Protection, and that, in one form or another, they would certainly attempt a restoration of the old bad system. He had to answer the objection that the Free Traders might remain tranquil because the Ministry might abandon Protection. Mr. Cobden could not believe in the possibility of such political turpitude. The poor man! He actually believed that a politician like Mr. Disraeli cared something about political honour and political consistency.*

* "But I am told," said Mr. Cobden, speaking at the meeting to revive the Anti-Corn-Law League, "that we must allow the Protectionists to remain in office for twelve months, because that will give them the opportunity of abandoning all their professions and principles, and of cheating their friends. Now, I tell you candidly, I do not believe Lord Derby and his colleagues are one-half so base as these advisers take them to be. What! the men who hunted that illustrious statesman (Sir R. Peel) almost to his grave, for having abolished the Corn Law—whose sole political capital, from that time to this, has been the sarcasms and obloquy with which they have covered his name and fame, and the abuse and denunciations with which they have loaded the gentlemen of the Manchester school—are these men going to do, not what Sir Robert Peel did, but ten times worse? Are we now to believe that Lord Derby and his colleagues are coming into office simply and solely that they may immediately get rid of the

Apart from the general reasons for suspecting Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli of an intention to restore Protection, there were several remarkable circumstances of recent occurrence to confirm the fear. The reader has not forgotten that in the course of 1851 Lord Derby had been offered and had declined the task of forming a Government. In giving a narrative of his proceedings on that occasion in the House of Lords, he thought it proper to sketch the programme which he would have attempted to carry out in office. Beginning with a picture of agricultural distress, he declared that he could not as "an honest man" take office "without a full determination to deal with that distress, and endeavour to apply to it, as a Minister, effective measures of relief." If he could "so far forget" himself as to sacrifice his "own honest convictions," "the loss of honour that would be involved in such a course would make" his "services worse than useless." And then he went on to say, as a consequence of those ideas, that he could not, "as an honest man, abandon the attempt to relieve the existing distress by *retracing the false step which has been taken, and to remedy the*

principles which they have hitherto advocated, and which they have denounced their former leader for having abandoned? I say I do not believe it. I believe that such a thing would show that we have fallen into a lower status of political morality than it is alleged they now have in France. I, on the contrary, believe the Ministry to be sincere in their professions. I believe they came into office with a view to carrying out those professions. But are you going to allow them to remain in office, to be sharpening their weapons in order that they may stab you when they find you off your guard? (Cheers.)"—*Ashworth: Cobden and the League*, 352-3

wrong done by the imposition of a moderate import duty on corn." *

In the course of that same year, too, a deputation had waited on Lord Derby for the purpose of discovering whether he was still "sound" on the great question. His answer to this deputation was that they should trust in him; that he would succeed yet in restoring Protection: † and, after those strong words, he wound up by the question whether what he had said should not "secure" him "in future from the misrepresentation that" he "had abandoned Protection." ‡

When, therefore, on taking his seat for the first time as Prime Minister, Lord Derby proceeded to announce his policy, the world of enemies and friends was astounded to find that the bold, fluent, blunt defender of Protection was timid, hesitating, and unintelligible in his expressions of opinion on the great controversy between Free Trade and Protection.

Astonishing as was this change of front, still more

* Quoted by Earl Grey on March 15, 1852; *Hansard*, 3 S. cxix. 1020.

† "Not two years ago the noble Earl told a deputation of farmers to trust to him that he would yet succeed in restoring Protection; that he was longing for the time, which he was confident would come, when he should be able to address his followers in the memorable words of the noble Duke at the table, and cry, 'Up, Guards, and at them!' (The Earl of Derby: 'I told them to trust to themselves.') The noble Earl told them that they must trust to themselves, but that they should also trust to the party which was pledged to Protection, and rally round it."—Speech of Earl Grey, March 15, 1852 · *Hansard*, 3 S. cxix. 1017-18.

‡ Quoted by Lord John Russell, March 19, 1852; *Hansard*, 3 S cxiv. 1371-2,

strange was the picture presented by the Ministers who were seeking re-election. Never was there such a saturnalia—except, perhaps, a few months after, with the same performers in the same piece—never was there such a saturnalia in English politics. Free Trade was a question which affected the daily food of all the millions of British subjects directly, and indirectly the daily food of all mankind; it was the question which had been the central and supreme subject of political battle in England for the previous ten years; never, in short, had the English or any other public to deal with a question of vaster, more far-reaching, more stupendous importance. It is scarcely credible, though it is unquestionably true, that on such a subject this country permitted its rulers to hesitate and trifle, to refuse any opinion at all, or to express opinions the most opposite. The marvel that such conduct should be tolerated appears the greater when we remember that these very men, who declined to say what they meant to do in reference to Protection, had lived and thrived and had their whole political being and importance for years as advocates of Protection. It is thus that a nation, which boasts of its seriousness, its solidity of judgment, its bluntness of tongue, entrusts its highest destinies to fools, triflers, and tricksters.

Let us return to the electoral masquerade of Lord Derby's and Mr. Disraeli's colleagues. Mr. Christopher, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, declared that his reason for accepting office "under the adminis-

tration of the Earl of Derby" was "from a conviction of his sincere desire *to reverse that financial and commercial policy which has proved so injurious to native industry and capital.*"* But on the other hand we had Mr. Walpole and Sir Frederick Thesiger: the one saying that "if we are to have a Free Trade policy— . . . . *and I am by no means saying that that is not to be the principle upon which you are to act;*" and the other that "as to Protection, if the country rejects it at the next election, there is an end of it altogether, and let it never hereafter be discussed."†

But, puzzling as were the announcements of the subordinate members of the Ministry, most mystifying of all was that of the great professor of mystification who had now taken the position of leader of the House of Commons. In his address he hoped that "at no distant period" the Government will "establish a policy in conformity with the principles which in opposition we have felt it our duty to maintain."‡ But when he came to define what those principles were, it was quite impossible to understand his meaning. The point of his address, however, seemed to be that he would adopt the plan he had so often recommended in Parliament during the previous session—that of compensating the landlords for the loss of Protection by the reduction of the taxation upon land.§

In his speech after re-election he was equally mys-

* *Examiner*, March 6, 1852.
† *Spectator*, March 6, 1852.
‡ *Ibid.*
§ *Ibid.*

terious. He declared that he "would pledge the Government to secure for the agricultural interest ample and complete redress;" and then he proceeded to explain that the best mode of "settlement for the community" was the mode recommended by Mr. M'Culloch—viz., that of a moderate fixed duty.* But he was careful immediately afterwards to add that if the country did not approve of this plan he would not endeavour to carry it out.†

The reader has now sufficient material to enable him to see the nature of the game which Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli meant to play. They had already clearly seen that Protection was—to use a graphic Americanism—"played out": that the restoration of that barbarous system was hopeless. But of course they dared not make this open confession to their followers at that moment, and accordingly, their great object was to gain

* Speech of Mr. Disraeli to his constituents. See *Examiner*, March 13, 1852. Mr. Disraeli was afterwards shown to have been guilty of a gross misrepresentation of Mr. M'Culloch's views; for that gentleman, while stating his individual opinion that a moderate fixed duty would be the best relief for the grievances of the landlords, at the same time distinctly declared that any attempt to impose such a duty at this period would revive a dangerous agitation, and would be unwise and impolitic. (See *Treatise on Taxation and the Funding System*, 2nd ed., 200.)

† "I will not believe, until the country has spoken, that it will not sanction the policy recommended by the highest authorities amongst the Free-Traders—by men who were Free-Traders before these brawling Free-Traders of the hour existed.—(Cheers and disapprobation.) . . . . If the country in its calm judgment *reject what I believe to be the advice of wise and unimpassioned servants of the community*, such as the distinguished writer to whom I have referred, *the country must take the consequence.*"—*Ibid.*

time, hoping that something might turn up which would either enable them to abandon Protection altogether, or that a change in the temper of the country would give them an opportunity of reintroducing it under a new name. To adopt such a course was a direct violation, not only of constitutional precedent, but of the dictates of political morality. It was unconstitutional, for it is the first duty of a Government to bring forward subjects for legislation; and, failing to find the House of Commons willing to accept these proposals, they are bound, if they believe the country along with them, immediately to make an appeal to it. It was politically immoral, because the Derby-Disraeli Ministry came to power by virtue of their advocacy of Protection, and by Protection, therefore, they were bound to stand or fall.

When Mr. Disraeli came to make his statement on first taking his seat as Chancellor of the Exchequer after his re-election on March 15, his explanation was found to be still more unsatisfactory, and naturally enough, still less clear, than that of Lord Derby. In the first place he put forward the pretence that the existing Government owed its being to the fact that, to use the words of Lord John Russell, "the Queen was without a Government." *

The reader can see what advantage Government gained by such a defence; if true, it would to some extent perhaps relieve them from dealing at once with the question of Protection. There would

* Hansard, cxix. 1065.

be an obvious difference between their seeking for office and having office forced upon them. If they directly sought for office, of course they rendered themselves liable to a demand that they should immediately carry out their principles, but if they were forced into power against their will, they might reasonably ask to be allowed in the first instance to carry on the business of the country, which must otherwise remain in abeyance. But the pretence that office was forced upon them, as Lord John Russell afterwards pointed out, was a completely false one. The Protectionist party had never failed to join with the enemies of the late Government, and the Russell Ministry would still have been in existence had it not been that the Protectionists had united with Lord Palmerston against it on a vote upon a vital question.

When Mr. Disraeli came to explain his policy, he still more clearly illustrated the system of prevarication upon which his government was founded. Mr. Villiers, on the part of the Free-Traders, had asked for a definitive declaration of principles. Mr. Disraeli began, characteristically enough, by stating that he would frankly and fairly answer the question of Mr. Villiers —a preface which, to all who knew him, was a very significant warning that he meant to say nothing which had the smallest tinge of either frankness or fairness. He omitted all mention of the fixed duty upon which he had been so eloquent in Buckinghamshire, and he did not say a word which could be interpreted into

a definite declaration as to whether the Government was a Protectionist Government or not.

Mr. Disraeli was followed by Lord John Russell and several other Free Trade leaders. Sir James Graham significantly remarked that "it is not, however, from the right hon. Gentleman who represents the Government in this House that I seek for the explanations."* Sir James then pointed out the extraordinary difference between the expressions of opinion by the different members of the Government, pointedly contrasting the frankness of some of those gentlemen with the duplicity of Mr. Disraeli.† Mr. Gladstone also supported the demand for clear explanation on the part of the Government, and demonstrated clearly the unconstitutional character of their delay in dissolving Parliament. Another remarkable speech in this debate was that of Mr. Oswald. That gentleman, explaining that he himself had been denounced as a traitor and renegade for following Sir Robert Peel in his abandonment of Protection in 1846, prophesied that the very persons who had applied these epithets to him were now about to abandon Protection, and were about to hear in their own ears the insults they had showered on others;‡ and Sir Alexander Cockburn neatly summarised the policy of Mr. Disraeli as meaning, "Heads I win, tails you lose."§

Those scenes took place on March 15, and a day or two afterwards a very remarkable circumstance

* Hansard, 3 S. cxix. 1083.
† *Ibid.* 1088.
‡ *Ibid.* 1102—1110.
§ *Ibid.* 1124.

occurred. While the Ministry of Lord John Russell was still in existence, Sir John Pakington gave notice of a motion in reference to colonial sugar. Now, the then existing duties on foreign sugar were to terminate on July 5, and the motion of Sir John Pakington was to the effect that this enactment should not be carried out, and that some small measure of protection should still be continued to the colonial grower.* But, marvellous to relate, Sir John, immediately on his accession to office as Colonial Secretary in a Protectionist cabinet, in place of attempting to carry out his ideas, gave notice of the withdrawal of this Protectionist motion. Lord John Russell, taking this as his text, addressed on the 19th March an inquiry to the Chancellor of the Exchequer as to the time when the Government intended to dissolve Parliament. Of course he received an evasive reply ;† and, naturally dissatisfied, he asked for a further explanation.‡ The reply of Mr. Disraeli was a model of frankness and politeness. "I do not feel," he said, "called on to give any further explanation to the question of the noble Lord."§

On the same evening, in Committee of Supply, another attempt was made to force the Government into an explanation of their policy. Mr. Bernal Osborne happily described Mr. Disraeli's tactics as a system of "Italian mystification" in which the "cloven foot of protection" was concealed "under the

* Hansard, cxix. 1036.
† *Ibid.* 1301.
‡ *Ibid.* 1299—1302.
§ *Ibid.* 1302.

smock-frock of official reserve;"* and Sir Benjamin Hall quoted some passages from Mr. Disraeli's philippics against Peel on account of his abandonment of Protection, which were very apposite at this hour in connection with Mr. Disraeli's abandonment of exactly the same cause.† But the most remarkable speech of the evening was that of Mr. Cobden, who showed in the clearest manner that the existing Government was founded on Protection, and that unless it meant to use its exertions to restore Protection, it had no right to exist.‡ Mr. Bright, taking up the same line of argument, warned the farmers that they were "deluded dupes" on whose shoulders the Ministry had "scrambled" to their "seats of power."§

Mr. Disraeli, however, made no attempt to further enlighten the country as to his policy. He contented himself, knowing that no vote would be immediately taken, with the barefaced assertion that his Government was not in a minority in the House of Commons.

Before the work of again cross-examining the Government on their policy of duplicity could be resumed, circumstances gave them an opportunity of achieving a victory which greatly strengthened their position. The Government of Lord John Russell had prepared the public mind for the belief that an

* *Ibid.* 1310. † *Ibid.* 1325—1336. ‡ *Ibid.* 1339.

§ *Ibid.* 1395. "I say to you," said Mr. Bright also, "we will try if we cannot break up a confederated imposture."—*Ibid.* Does not the last phrase recall Mr. Disraeli's "organised hypocrisy"? But how much more truth was there in Mr. Bright's attack than in that of Mr. Disraeli?

increase in the defences of the country was required; and, taking up this idea, the new Ministry brought forward another Militia Bill. The measure was opposed by Lord John Russell and some other members of the late Government; but was supported very generally, and found a most potent advocate in the House of Commons in Lord Palmerston, and in the House of Lords in the Duke of Wellington. The result was, that when the division came, the opponents of the Bill were but 165, while the supporters of the Government were 355. This overwhelming triumph naturally added to their prestige, and encouraged them to proceed in their determination to rule the country for some time longer without any definite declaration of their policy.

But the time at last approached when Mr. Disraeli could no longer conceal his hand. On April 30 he introduced his Budget. The speech he delivered on the occasion was as bold and remarkable as any that was ever delivered in the House of Commons.* Amid the melancholy faces of his supporters and the continued cheers of his opponents, he practically abandoned Protection; in fact, the whole speech was one triumphant vindication of the results of Free Trade. He showed that, instead of being reduced, the revenue of the country had steadily and largely increased. He showed that the reduction of the duty on coffee, on timber, and on sugar, had largely increased the consumption of each of these three

* Hansard, 3 S. cxxi. 9—36.

articles, and he admitted that as a result the loss of revenue was far less than had been anticipated.*

The reader will not fail to remember that the man who was describing the "marvellous results," as he later on called them,† produced by the reduction of the duty on sugar, was the same man, who from 1846 downwards had been constantly and persistently declaring that the abolition of those duties would be ruinous to the Colonies! ‡

* The duty on coffee had in the previous year been reduced from sixpence per pound on foreign and fourpence on colonial to a uniform duty of threepence. The result has been an increase in the consumption not only of foreign, but of colonial coffee: as a consequence, while the loss of duty was estimated at £176,000, the real loss was £112,000.—*Ibid.* 22. The duty on foreign timber had been reduced from 15*s.* to 7*s.* 6*d.* hewn, and from 20*s.* to 10*s.* on sawn timber. Though the duty had been thus reduced by one-half, the real had been about half the estimated loss: the real loss was £126,000, the estimated loss £206,000.—*Ibid.* Then, coming to the question of sugar, he showed that the case of the Free-Traders was even still more clearly proved. He pointed out that since the alteration in the sugar duties in 1846, the increase of the consumption had amounted to so large a figure as 33 per cent. The result of this marvellous increase was that, while the estimated loss on this department of the revenue had been £330,000 or £340,000, the actual loss had been £309!—*Ibid.* 23.

† *Ibid.* 28.

‡ I wonder if Mr. Disraeli, while he was making this recantation of his opinion on the sugar duties, recalled a scene with Lord George Bentinck which he has himself described with much apparent satisfaction. In the Session of 1847, Lord George obtained the appointment of a Select Committee to consider the sugar and coffee duties, While this committee was sitting, "Surplice," a horse with which, among the rest of his stud, Lord George had parted, won the Derby. This, according to Lord Beaconsfield, caused Bentinck much annoyance ("Life of Bentinck," 539): a few days afterwards, however, the Committee adopted a resolution of a Protective character; and this is how Lord Beaconsfield describes the result: "But on Monday, the 29th, when the resolution in favour of a 10*s.* differential duty for

Finally, Mr. Disraeli concluded his address by announcing that, owing to the shortness of the period since he had received office, he was bound to accept the budget of his predecessor.*

Such a speech was naturally received with the greatest delight by the Free-Traders; and it is also fair to say that Mr. Disraeli got compliments, and well-deserved compliments, from all sides of the House, for the lucidity and ability of his first address as Chancellor of the Exchequer. But the point every one of the Liberal speakers insisted upon was, that Mr. Disraeli had proved their case as clearly as any one of themselves could. Mr. Disraeli "had made out," said Sir Charles Wood, "what we on this side of the House consider a triumphant case for the policy which we have advocated." † "He had," said Mr. Hume, "shown by figures and in language which could not be misunderstood, that the policy which had been followed ever since 1842 had been most successful." ‡ Mr. Gladstone was "perfectly satisfied" to leave the

the colonies had at the last moment been carried, and carried by his casting vote, 'the blue ribbons of the turf' were all forgotten. Not for all the honours and successes of all the meetings, spring or autumn, Newmarket, Epsom, Goodwood, Doncaster, would he have exchanged that hour of rapture. His eye sparkled with fire, his nostril dilated with triumph, his brow was elate like a conqueror, his sanguine spirit saw a future of continued and illimitable success. 'We have saved the colonies,' he said, 'saved the colonies. I knew it must be so. *It is the knell of Free Trade.*'" ("Life of Bentinck," 539-40.) We see how Mr. Disraeli justified this prophecy. It was well for Bentinck, perhaps, after all, that he died so soon. The friends of Lord Beaconsfield, whom the gods love, die young.

* Hansard, 3 S. cxxi. 35-6. † *Ibid.* 37. ‡ *Ibid.* 42.

case of the commercial policy of the last few years "to remain on the very able statement of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer." * And finally, Mr. Disraeli, in the words of Mr. Bright, "had stood forth in the face of the House and the country to bless the policy which he had so frequently censured." † But the thoroughly Free-Trade character of the speech is still more clearly shown by the halting praises of Mr. Disraeli's supporters, which contrast very curiously with the enthusiastic eulogiums of his opponents. Mr. Baring denied the existence of the prosperity which Mr. Disraeli had spoken about.‡ Sir John Tyrell made some blundering attempt to reconcile the good condition of the Revenue with the bad condition of trade.§ And poor Sir John Pakington endeavoured to explain that while this country had gained, the colonies had lost, by the decrease in the price of sugar.‖ It shows a curious contrast in the manner in which other people treat Mr. Disraeli, and the manner in which he treats them, that this shameless abandonment of Protection, by one who had exhausted his abundant vocabulary of vituperation against the abandonment of Protection by another Minister, this public act of apostacy by a man who had risen to his present position as a denouncer of apostacy, was not made the object of any severe personal attacks. Mr. Hume made a brief allusion to this remarkable change, but with his usual good-nature his reproach

* *Ibid.* 51.
† *Ibid.* 68.
‡ *Ibid.* 47-8.
§ *Ibid.* 56-8.
‖ *Ibid.* 68-71.

took the form of a mild expression of the hope that Mr. Disraeli looked back with regret and remorse on his past career, and the manner in which he had treated and persecuted the late right hon. Baronet who had first introduced the system.* "Would to God," said Mr. Wakley, who was a little more emphatic, "Sir Robert Peel had been alive to listen to the profound homage paid him by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the exposition of the facts which he submitted to the House to-night!"† And so Mr. Disraeli was allowed to make his recantation.

As the country party, however, were not yet quite prepared to swallow this wholesale abandonment of Protection, and as their murmurs grew loud and threatening, it became necessary for the Ministry to make another change of front. The manner in which this was done was certainly extraordinary, if not unprecedented. Speaking shortly after the introduction of the Budget at a banquet in the City, Lord Derby had the boldness to refer to the speech of Mr. Disraeli. The municipal dignitaries were then favoured with the information that Mr. Disraeli had not meant all he had said to the House of Commons. The representatives of the people, in fact, Lord Derby whispered to the Aldermen, were being taken in; it was necessary to make them think the Government intended to adopt Free Trade; but that was only Mr. Disraeli's "little game."

Shortly after this move in the extraordinary system

* *Ibid.* 43. † *Ibid.* 55.

of self-contradiction which the Government were pursuing, there came another revelation of the Ministerial mind. This was Mr. Disraeli's address to his Buckinghamshire constituents. The address, like the speech on the Budget, was an open avowal of the abandonment of Protection. Indeed, it seemed as if there were a sort of tacit agreement between Lord Derby and his Chancellor of the Exchequer, that while one of them should satisfy the manufacturers, the other should reassure the terrified agriculturists. In this address Mr. Disraeli boldly declared that the time had gone by for the recurrence of Protection. The spirit of the age, he said, was against any such measure, and no statesman could afford to disregard the genius of the epoch in which he lived. And then he went back to his old scheme of compensating for the loss of Protection by a decrease of local taxation.* But even in this promise of relief he was studiously vague. He would go no farther than to say that it seemed to "*loom in the future,*" †—an expression that caused a good deal of comment and amusement.

On June 14 the Opposition made one other effort to discover what the Minister really intended to do. After proposing a motion condemnatory of Lord Malmesbury's policy in reference to a gentleman named Mather, who had been ill treated by an Austrian officer at Florence, Lord John Russell took occasion to give a general review of the Ministerial policy. He pointed out how Lord Derby had declared emphatically, and how the

* *Times*, June 7, 1852 † *Ibid.*

Chancellor of the Exchequer had backed up the declaration, that a moderate duty upon corn was absolutely necessary for the interest of agriculture, and then proceeded to show how gradually the Government had withdrawn from this position, and had shown that "this desirable measure was to be abandoned." * He next pointed out the remarkable contrast between the thoroughly Free-Trade speech of Mr. Disraeli on introducing his Budget, and the Protectionist gloss that had been put on Mr. Disraeli's speech by Lord Derby in the City; † and he showed how, as a result of this disagreement between the declarations of the Ministers, different supporters of the Government were seeking election in different constituencies on diametrically opposite principles—how at one place an adherent of Lord Derby put himself forward as an unconverted Protectionist, and in another place another adherent of the existing Ministry declared himself as emphatically in favour of Free Trade. ‡

Mr. Disraeli's reply was characteristically audacious. He had the face to deny that either he or the Protectionist party had ever asked for a recurrence of the laws that existed previous to 1846. "You cannot," he said, "recall a single speech to that effect; I defy anybody to quote any speech that I ever made, or any sentence that I ever uttered, that recommended such a course as desirable or possible." §

* Hansard, 3 S. cxxii. 636.
† *Ibid.* 637.
‡ *Ibid.*
§ *Ibid.* 692.

This statement, as the reader who has followed these pages will well know, was audaciously false. Not in a single speech, but in scores of speeches—not in one sentence, but in a hundred—did Mr. Disraeli suggest that the restoration of the Protectionist laws was "desirable" and "possible." He told the Bucks electors in 1847, the reader will remember, that though an attempt to restore Protection might not be advisable at the moment, its restoration in the course of time was inevitable. Both in 1847 and 1848 he suggested that the policy of Free Trade should be reversed. It is quite true that as time went on he gradually changed his tone; but not until he saw office in sight did he ever once even hint that the days of Protection were past. I have not, as I have before said, the least doubt that Mr. Disraeli knew, from 1846 onwards, that any attempt to once more raise the price of bread would be futile; but this was a conviction which he carefully concealed within his own bosom. For years he allowed his followers to cherish the idea that a return of Protection was a possibility. It was the conviction that Free Trade might be reversed and Protection restored that kept together his party, and maintained his position as one of its leaders. By insisting, time after time, on some measure which had more or less of a Protectionist air, he kept up that division between Sir Robert Peel and his supporters which prevented the reunion of the different elements of the Conservative party. If it were most true, and it was most false, that he had never advocated the restoration

of Protection as desirable or possible, then, in acting as the leader of a Protectionist party, he had practised for years a game of shameless deception, and of deception which was fatal to the interests of those he professed to serve.

It was equally false to say that his party had not advocated a return to Protection as desirable or possible. Let us take only the most prominent members of his party. We have just seen what Mr. Disraeli's chief had said in 1851 about the possibility of restoring Protection. Lord Malmesbury was at this moment another of Mr. Disraeli's colleagues, and Minister for Foreign Affairs. At a Protectionist meeting held in Drury Lane Theatre on June 26, 1849, that noble Lord declared that it was not yet too late to retrace the mischievous legislation of 1846, and he emphasized this declaration by one of those appeals to the Deity, at once vehement and familiar, which are characteristic of ranting preachers and Tory lords.* And finally, Mr. Christopher, as has also been seen, had, within a few weeks of this speech of Mr. Disraeli, announced to his constituents that his chief motive in joining the Ministry of Lord Derby was his conviction that the policy of Free Trade would be reversed.

In this speech, also, Mr. Disraeli indicated his readi-

* Irving, 163. Lord Malmesbury, expressing a hope that the Free-Trade theory would never be consummated, added this beautiful sentiment: "But should it please God in His anger that it should be effected, then would this great kingdom soon return to its normal and natural state—a weather-beaten island in a northern sea." This passage invites comment, but I abstain.

ness to abandon even the small fixed duty, on which both he and Lord Derby had formerly been so vehement. It was a proposal, he said, to which he would "not pin" his "political career" nor make "the basis" of his "policy," and he even ventured to denounce it as "invested" "with popular odium," as "disliked by the people," * and as one which the "popular will repudiates." †

On July 1, Parliament was dismissed, and the same discreditable scenes which took place when the Ministers sought re-election in the previous March, were repeated on a larger scale. The ambiguous and contradictory language of the Government had its natural and its desired consequence. The Ministerial candidate, like the Government itself, had no policy beyond that which suited the hour and the place. Where Free-Trade professions were likely to produce success, the supporter of Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli was a Free-Trader; where the faith in Protection still survived, the supporter of Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli was a Protectionist.

But these contradictions were not confined to the rank and file of the Protectionist party; there was the same startling diversity between the utterances of the Ministers themselves. Speaking at his election dinner in Bucks, "Why," said Mr. Disraeli, "no one can suppose that the present administration has any intention of taxing the food of the people, or of bringing back the laws repealed in 1846." "The question of Protec-

* *Ibid.* 692. † *Ibid.* 693.

tion,"* said Lord Stanley (now Lord Derby) at King's Lynn, "is set at rest, and I am glad of it." Mr. Christopher in Lincolnshire, Mr. Walpole at Midhurst, and Lord John Manners at Colchester, on the other hand, still dropped suggestions that the good old days of Protection were close at hand.† Still more flagrant was the case of Sir Fitzroy Kelly. Solicitor-General in the Ministry of Sir Robert Peel, he had, of course, supported the Free-Trade measure of that statesman in 1846. At this election of 1852, he had the face to go back on his former professions and votes, and to make a violent Protectionist harangue.‡ The General Election, in fact, degenerated into a political Donnybrook, in which all principles were confused and all political morality vanished.§

The new Parliament met on November 11. The speech from the Throne contained a single paragraph in reference to the all-absorbing controversy of the hour, and that paragraph was studiously ambiguous. The "improved condition of the country, and especially of the industrious classes," was first admitted, and then

* Irving's Annals, 229.

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Ibid.*

§ Macaulay very happily described the action of the Ministerials. "Not only did they suit their language to town or country constituencies, but individual candidates were seen from the same reason to change all their former professions. Lord Maidstone, a vehement Protectionist, adopted the policy of Sir Robert Peel when standing for Westminster; while Sir Fitzroy Kelly, Peel's Solicitor-General, made a speech at East Suffolk which might have been composed out of Lord Maidstone's hexameters. The one forgot his votes, the other his verse."—*Irving*, 229.

a suggestion was made that certain important interests should be compensated, *if* Parliament were of opinion that such interests had been injured by recent legislation.*

This was certainly the most extraordinary speech that had ever yet been delivered from the Throne; and never had so gross an attempt been made by a Government to continue existence without any declaration of principles. This marks a further and bolder step in the abandonment of the opinions by which the Ministry had risen to power. They had begun by declaring that Protection, in all its plenitude, should be restored: then some of the leaders had suggested that they would be satisfied with a moderate duty: next came the bright idea of Mr. Disraeli, that the land should be compensated for the loss of Protection by the decrease of taxation: and now even that last and smallest remedy is abandoned. But that is not the worst part of the case against the Ministry. During all the years which had followed the abandonment of Protection, Lord Derby, Mr. Disraeli, and the other Protectionist leaders, as the reader has seen, daily

* This is the text of the paragraph: "It gives me pleasure to be enabled, by the blessing of Providence, to congratulate you on the generally improved condition of the country, and especially of the industrious classes. If you should be of opinion that recent legislation, in contributing, with other causes, to this happy result, has at the same time inflicted unavoidable injury on certain important interests, I recommend you dispassionately to consider how far it may be practicable equitably to mitigate that injury, and to enable the industry of the country to meet successfully that unrestricted competition to which Parliament, in its wisdom, has decided that it should be subjected."—*Hansard*, 3 S. cxxiii. 19, 20.

declared that Free Trade had inflicted incalculable injury on the country in general and on the land in particular. The abolition of the Sugar Duties had ruined our West Indian, the abolition of the Timber Duties had ruined our American colonies: the repeal of the Navigation Laws had destroyed our shipping and the removal of the duty on corn had lowered the wages of the labourer and the rents of the landlord. Well, Mr. Disraeli in the previous session had openly abandoned the Protectionist's case on sugar and on timber, and lastly on the Navigation Laws. But there was still one point to be surrendered: that was the case of the landlords, and their claim for compensation. The grievance of the landlord had appeared in nearly every one of his speeches on commercial policy for the last six years, and the justice of compensating for this grievance by a reduction of taxation. What I have already written explains why he should have adhered to this idea so obstinately. It was the only alternative he had to offer for the impossible plan of restoring Protection altgether, or even in the modified form of a small import duty: it was the last charge under which he covered his retreat from Protection. Accordingly, we find that even in his speeches in the previous recess in which he abandoned so many things, he still maintained the idea of relieving the land. The elections were still going on—the Protectionists still demanded some sop; and so this bait was dangled before their eyes. But the constituencies had now given their answer: that answer had been fatal to Protection

under any shape; and thus the last poor consolation of the landlord was as freely abandoned as all the other articles of the Protectionist creed. The distress of the landlords, and the necessity for relief, were in all the speeches before the final result, put forward boldly, distinctly, vehemently, as an indisputable fact. In the speech from the throne, the tone is completely altered. "*If* you should be of opinion that recent legislation" has "inflicted unavoidable injury on certain important interests, I recommend you to dispassionately consider," etc.—the distress of the landlord and his claim for relief are relegated to the region of the hypothetical. It is one of the many questions Parliament must decide: as to the opinion of the Ministry—they really know nothing about it. Here was a new departure, with a vengeance, in the art of governing by party.

The Free-Traders were determined, however, not to let the Government escape with ambiguous declarations, and Parliament had scarcely met when Mr. Villiers again came forward with a demand for a definite proclamation of principles. In the debate on the address Mr. Villiers announced the general character of a motion he intended to bring forward at the earliest opportunity.* Lord John Russell also complained of the vagueness of the speech from the throne, and of the ambiguity of the Ministerial action.† He showed how, during the elections, the country had been utterly perplexed by the contradictory declarations of members of the Protectionist party,‡ and how, even still, when

* Hansard, 3 S. cxxiii. 70—75. † *Ibid.* 80. ‡ *Ibid.* 81.

the country had distinctly declared against them and their policy, the Cabinet refused to definitely announce their abandonment of Protection;* and, finally, he called upon Mr. Disraeli to emerge from that mist in which, "like some of the goddesses of old," he "loves to conceal himself."†

Mr. Disraeli, in his reply, made the distinct declaration that, in future, the commercial system of the country should be conducted on the principle of "unrestricted competition;‡ and the declaration was noted by several subsequent speakers as decisive as to the opinion of the Chanceller of the Exchequer, at least, on the question of Free Trade or Protection. He went on to disclaim the idea of giving "compensation for losses which have been occasioned by changes in the legislation which heretofore regulated the commerce of this country,"§—in other words, he abandoned the main ground of the numberless motions and speeches he had made on agricultural distress since 1846. He then gave a glimpse of the scheme by which he hoped, while not enraging the Free-Traders, to soothe the Protectionists. It was his intention to propose "a proper revision of our taxation," so as to "make our financial system more in harmony with our commercial system."‖

This phrase, "revision of taxation," was one of the latest productions of Mr. Disraeli's art of concealing the same idea under different language. He had used

* *Ibid.* 81-82.
† *Ibid.* 83.
‡ *Ibid.* 86.
§ *Ibid.* 88.
‖ *Ibid.*

the phrase frequently, and with considerable success, during the recess. He saw, of course, that the idea of compensating the landlords for the loss of Protection was altogether impracticable—in the shape, at least, in which he had formerly clothed the proposal. His plan, as we know, in his pre-Ministerial days, was to relieve the land of a considerable quantity of local burdens. That plan, under the name of compensation, being impossible, he now advanced the same scheme under the name of "revision of taxation." We shall see more clearly his object by-and-by, when we come to the production of his Budget.

It might have been expected that this further abandonment by Mr. Disraeli of his former opinions would have brought down on him a severe castigation from those who remembered his own attacks on Sir Robert Peel. But it is one of the advantages of a man like Mr. Disraeli, that other people are too scrupulous, or too gentle, or too proud, to use against him arts which he would employ against them without scruple, or mercy, or shame. Accordingly, tempting though the occasion was, Mr. Disraeli was allowed to escape almost without a rebuke. The friends and former colleagues of the late Sir Robert Peel scarcely whispered a word of censure; so that Mr. Cobden felt bound to ironically compliment them on their Christian power of forgiving.*

* "The late Sir Robert Peel avowed changing his opinions, and yet he was not allowed to remain in peace with his new convictions, though he abandoned office as the price of his conversion. I don't think the Gentlemen opposite have any reason to complain of the retri-

Before I proceed to the next stage in the controversy between Free Trade and Protection, I must allude to one of the strangest episodes in Lord Beaconsfield's career. The Duke of Wellington had died during the recess, and it became the duty of Mr. Disraeli, as leader of the House of Commons, to propose that the House should attend his funeral. As was natural, he delivered a panegyric on the merits of the late Commander-in-Chief, in making this motion. The world was astounded to learn from the *Globe* newspaper, a day or two afterwards, that a considerable amount of the eulogium upon this solemn and momentous occasion was a plagiarism, almost word for word, from an article which had appeared in a French review, and which had generally been ascribed to M. Thiers. The *Globe* proved its case in the clearest manner by putting side by side the words of Mr. Disraeli and the words of the French review.* Mr. Disraeli himself did not attempt any

bution with which they have been visited. I have often felt, and I have often been on the point of saying, what I will not hesitate to say now—that the personal friends and political colleagues of the late Sir Robert Peel have, in my opinion, shown more forbearance towards his assailants than ever I could have done with the Christian temper I aim at possessing."—*Hansard*, 3 S. cxxiii. 117.

* I quote from the *Globe*, November 18, 1852 :—

Mr. Disraeli.	French Review.
It is not that a great general must be an engineer—a geographer—learned in human nature—adroit in the management of men—that he must be able to fulfil the highest duty of a Minister of State, and then to descend to the humblest office of a commissary and	An engineer, a geographer, a man of the world, metaphysician, knowing men, knowing how to govern them, an administrator in great things, a clerk in small—all these things it is necessary to be, but these are as yet nothing. All this vast knowledge must be

reply, but Mr. George Smythe, his old colleague in the Young England movement, came to his rescue. The *Globe* had stated that the translation of this French eulogium had appeared in an article in the *Morning Chronicle* in the year 1848. Mr. Smythe now declared that he was the writer of the article to which allusion had been made.

a clerk ; but he has to display all this knowledge and to exercise all those duties at the same time, and under extraordinary circumstances. At every moment he has to think of the eve and the morrow—of his flank and of his rear—he has to calculate at the same time the state of the weather and the moral qualities of men ; and all those elements that are perpetually changing he has to combine, sometimes under overwhelming heat, sometimes under overpowering cold—oftentimes in famine, and frequently amidst the roar of artillery. (Hear, hear, hear.) Behind all these circumstances there is ever present the image of his country, and the dreadful alternative whether that country is to welcome him with laurel or with cypress. (Hear, hear.) Yet those images he must dismiss from his mind, for the general must not only think, but think with the rapidity of lightning ; for on a moment more or less depends the fate of the most beautiful combination — and a moment more or less is a question of glory or of shame. (Hear, hear.) Unquestionably, sir, all this may be done in an ordinary manner, exercised on the instant, in the midst of extraordinary circumstances. At every moment you must think of the yesterday and the morrow; of your flank and of your rear. Calculate at the same time on the atmosphere and on the temper of your men; and all these elements, so various and diverse, which are ceaselessly changing and renewed, you must combine in the midst of cold, heat, hunger, bullets. . . . . .

. . . . Farther off, and behind them, is the spectacle of your country, with laurel or with cypress. But all these images and ideas must be banished and set aside, for you must think, and think quickly,—one minute too much, and the fairest combination has lost its opportunity and instead of glory, it is shame that awaits you. All this undoubtedly is compatible with mediocrity, like every other profession ; one can also be a middling poet, a middling orator, a middling author; but this done with genius is sublime.

Mr. Disraeli, he said, had called his attention ten years before he wrote the article to a remarkable passage in a French review on the requirements of a great general, and Mr. Smythe had in the course of his writing made use of the information and quoted the passage.* The *Times* also became Mr. Disraeli's advocate, and

by an ordinary man, as every day of our lives we see that ordinary men may be successful ministers of state, successful authors, and successful speakers—but to do all this with genius is sublime. (Hear, hear.)

To be able to think with vigour, with depth, and with clearness in the recesses of the Cabinet is a great intellectual demonstration; but to think with equal vigour, clearness, and depth amidst the noise of bullets, appears to me the loftiest exercise and the most complete triumph of human faculties. (Cheers.)—*Mr. Disraeli on the Duke of Wellington*, 1852.

. . . To think in the quiet of one's Cabinet, clearly, strongly, nobly, this undoubtedly is great; but to think as clearly, as strongly, as nobly, in the midst of carnage and fire, is the most perfect exercise of the human faculties.—*M. Thiers on the Marshal Gouvion de St. Cyr*, 1829. (The *Morning Chronicle* of July, 1848.)

I append one of the many epigrams that were made upon Mr. Disraeli's escapade :—

> In sounding great Wellington's praise,
> Dizzy's grief and his truth both appear,
> For a great flood of tears (Thiers) he lets fall,
> Which were certainly meant for sincere (St. Cyr).
>
> *The Examiner*, Nov. 20, 1852.

* Here is Mr. Smythe's letter. "To the Editor of the *Times*.—Sir,—As the writer of the article of July 4, in the *Morning Chronicle*, from which Mr. Disraeli is charged with having taken a passage of his panegyric upon the late Duke of Wellington, I think it but just to that gentleman to exonerate him entirely from this unfounded accusation. It is more than ten years ago since Mr. Disraeli first mentioned to me this very striking eulogium of the military character which he remembered having read fifteen years before in a French review.

its account of the transaction was that the essay in question had much struck Mr. Disraeli's mind, that he committed some of its passages to memory, and that in repeating those passages he had merely resorted to an ordinary device of orators in omitting to give the authority from which he quoted. "To give the name of an authority," wrote the *Times*, "is always difficult in a "speech; much more so when it is a review or other "periodical. But the fair account of the matter is that "Mr. Disraeli found himself in the passage before he "had time to affix the proper title-page, introduction, "and table of contents. It is," continued the leading journal, "one of the evils of a well-stored memory that "a man cannot help quoting; but nothing destroys the "interest of a speech and the confidence of the hearer "so much as avowed quotations."

It does not require much reasoning to show that both these defences for Mr. Disraeli's conduct are no defences at all. What Mr. Disraeli really did was to pass off the

Having subsequently discovered that this article was by no less a personage than M. Thiers, I made use of the quotation in some comment on French military statesmen. It is, therefore, but fair to state that instead of Mr. Disraeli being indebted to the *Morning Chronicle* for the passage in question, the *Morning Chronicle* was indebted to Mr. Disraeli.—I have the honour to be, Sir, Your obedient servant, GEORGE SYDNEY SMYTHE.—68, Harley Street, November 21."

* It may be interesting to quote some further passages from the article in the *Times*. "We believe," it said, "the real truth to be much as follows:—A good many years ago Mr. Disraeli had the happiness to receive a copy of the *Revue Trimestre*, containing a favourable notice of his novel 'Vivian Grey,' then lately published, and was encouraged thereby to look into the rest of the articles. Among them was one, not particularly on Marshal St. Cyr, who was then alive, but

composition of another man as his own. Whether Mr. Disraeli was the first to notice this passage to the writer in the *Morning Chronicle*, or the writer in the *Morning Chronicle* to him, does not really influence the main issue, and the pleading of the *Times* is merely an apology for plagiarism under all circumstances. The newspaper press of the time did not accept these apologies, and the condemnations which were passed on this audacious, and at the same time petty trick, in presence of a great national calamity, were extremely severe, but at the same time extremely deserved.

On November 23 Mr. Villiers proposed his resolutions, which were three in number. They described the increased prosperity of the country, and especially of the working classes, as the result of recent legislation, and especially of the Act of 1846; and characterised that Act as "a wise, just, and beneficial measure." They next declared that the maintenance and extension of

on military genius, or some such wide subject. . . . Mr. Disraeli was pleased with the article, committed some passages to memory, and the passages so learnt have furnished successively a striking paragraph to a morning contemporary and to a speech in the House of Commons. All this is very natural. But why did not Mr. Disraeli give the name of the author? We believe it is not known. The passage is from an anonymous article in a review, probably, but not avowedly, by M. Thiers. To give the name of an authority is always difficult in a speech; much more so when it is a review or other periodical. But the fair account of the matter is that Mr. Disraeli found himself in the passage before he had time to affix the proper title-page, introduction, and table of contents. It is one of the evils of a well-stored memory that a man cannot help quoting; but nothing destroys the interest of speech and the confidence of the hearers so much as avowed quotations." (Nov. 2, 1852.)

Free Trade was the best means of enabling all classes of the country to bear their burdens, and concluded by expressing a readiness to consider any proposals of the Government framed in accordance with those principles.*

The debate extended over two nights, and was marked by several strange episodes, which however I shall not be able to touch more than briefly. The speech of Mr. Disraeli was of the same character as those he had been making since he had made up his mind to abandon Protection. He announced the startling fact that the reason why he had opposed Free Trade was, not that it would injure the landlord, nor the farmer, but that it would "prove injurious to the cause of labour."† This assertion is, of course, utterly incorrect, for Mr. Disraeli had opposed Free Trade as destructive of every interest as well as that of labour; but suppose it correct, what a splendid proof it is of Mr. Disraeli's political wisdom that he should have expected the working man to be ruined by having a cheaper loaf! He ventured shortly afterwards on the utterly false statement that "not a single attempt has been made in the House of Commons to abrogate the measure of 1846." The astounded House of course burst forth with an "Oh!" at this audacious untruth, whereupon Mr. Disraeli—*more suo*—proceeded to repeat it with greater emphasis than before. Professing, first, to believe that the expression of astonishment had come from the new members,‡ he went on to say, "I repeat

* Hansard, 3 S. cxxiii. 351. † *Ibid.* 382. ‡ *Ibid.* 383.

the statement which called forth the interruption . . . . that from the moment the Corn Laws were repealed till now, not a single Motion has ever been made in this House—at least, with the sanction of any party—to bring back that Protection which has so unnecessarily been attacked to-night."*

It was not surprising to find Mr. Disraeli declare after this that the party which had been returned in 1847 under his leadership and that of Lord George Bentinck, was not returned for the purpose of restoring Protection! No: he and his friends had been elected, not from feelings of hope in the future, but of gratitude for the past.†

So he went on, endeavouring to explain every gross tergiversation by as gross misrepresentation. He appealed in the end to the new members to favour him by being so kind as to forget his Protectionist past—that past which contained the denunciations of Peel for abandoning Protection, the acquisition of leadership through Protection, the elevation to ministerial dignity

* *Ibid.* 384.

† "When the general election of 1847 took place, the organisation of political parties was entirely broken up; very high prices for all kinds of farm produce, from peculiar causes, then existed; *and the opinions which influenced the constituent body on that occasion could hardly be said to have had any reference to the principles, the merits, or the possible consequences of recent legislation.*" Mark what follows: "A large Protectionist party was indeed returned to this House from a feeling which always animates great bodies of people in this country, who think they owe sympathy and gratitude to those who have fought their battles or carried their colours." (Laughter.)—*Hansard*, 3 S. cxxiii. 387. I have already laid sufficient materials before the reader to see how utterly devoid of truth is this representation of the election

through Protection. "I appeal," said this callous, unscrupulous assailant of Peel in the past,—"I appeal to the generous and the young. And I ask them to pause now that they are at last arrived on the threshold of the Senate of their country, and not become the tools and the victims of exhausted factions and obsolete politics."*

Lord Beaconsfield is perhaps tolerable when he speaks in his true character of unscrupulous and unprincipled cynic: he is not, to put it mildly, quite so bearable when he puts on what he perhaps considers the fascinating air of general amiability and confiding simplicity.

And what was the amendment which our Protectionist Minister proposed after his "appeal to the generous and the young"? It was simply the same thing as was said by Mr. Villiers, except that the Act of 1846 was not mentioned! It acknowledged that provisions had been cheapened by the recent legislation; that the working classes were prosperous; and that Free Trade—or, as Mr. Disraeli chose to call it,

of 1847. The House of Commons knew also, of course, that Mr. Disraeli was not telling the truth, and began to laugh. Characteristically he affected to misunderstand this mark of incredulity. "Hon. Gentlemen," said he, doubtless looking very serious and dignified, "may deride this feeling, but they may rely upon it that if this feeling do not exist, Parliamentary government would soon be a mere name." Of course what the House laughed at was not, as Mr. Disraeli affected to believe, the right of constituencies to be grateful, but his assertion that it was gratitude, and not the hope of restoring Protection, that influenced the constituencies in returning a Protectionist party.

* *Ibid.* 411.

"unrestricted competition"—having been deliberately chosen by the people at the last election, the Government were bound to maintain that principle in whatever measures they intended to bring forward.

Mr. Disraeli was succeeded by Mr. Bright, who spoke on behalf of the section led by himself, Mr. Cobden, and Mr. Villiers, and which had always been in favour of Free Trade. What Mr. Bright said in effect was that the present Ministry, and especially Mr. Disraeli, were not to be trusted, and that nothing would satisfy him or his friends but a resolution in which Free Trade, by name, and the Act of 1846, were distinctly and definitely approved. "Shall we allow any evasion?" asked Mr. Bright. "Shall we act in such a manner that the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who is a great master of words, and who, if there be a chink to get out at, is certain to escape, may hereafter say, 'The House of Commons never pledged itself in any manner to that Act, so as to preclude itself from considering whether direct compensation should not be made to farmers and landowners in consideration of that Act having been passed'?"*

Shortly after, another and unexpected turn was given to the debate by the intervention of Lord Palmerston. Desirous, for some reason or other, to come to the rescue of the Government, he proposed another substitute for the resolution of Mr. Villiers. This new amendment was in sense the same as the original resolution, save only that, like the amendment

* *Ibid.* 432.

of Mr. Disraeli, it avoided mention of the Act of 1846. The effect which this proposal had on the House can only be understood by remembering the fact that, in the opinion of the majority of the Liberals, the main point was to get an unmistakable Parliamentary declaration in favour of Free Trade; and that, in their view, this object would be best attained if a proposition, embodying Free Trade, could be so worded as to allow the bulk of the Conservatives, as of the Liberals, to vote in its favour. Mr. Disraeli grasped at the straw held out to him, withdrew his amendment, and accepted that of Lord Palmerston; and so Protection gave up the ghost. Protection had been stabbed by a score of daggers, and had still refused to die; to the man whom it raised from obscurity to fame, from a humble to almost the proudest position, to the man whose splendid fortune it had made—to Mr. Disraeli was reserved the task of giving it the *coup de grâce.*

This marvellous political phenomenon was freely commented upon. The Marquis of Granby, who, with a fidelity worthy of a better cause, still remained faithful to Protection, had the manliness to say that some acknowledgment was "due to the memory of" Peel,—"that man, whose patriotism I, for one, never doubted—and the purity of whose motives I never impugned."* Some Liberals expressed the same idea; and Mr. Bernal Osborne, with effective wit, exposed the tergiversation of Mr. Disraeli, and recalled

* *Ibid.* 497.

his bitter attacks on the man who had carried Free Trade.*

But it was the speech of Mr. Sidney Herbert which brought into bold relief the full and, it may even be said, tragic significance of the occasion. Mr. Herbert, everybody knew, had been the friend, the confidant, the political offspring of Peel, and the man who perhaps lay closest to Peel's heart. They knew, too, that Mr. Herbert had shared with Peel the foul-mouthed aspersions of Mr. Disraeli's tongue.† It was as if the shade of the departed statesman stood before the House to recall how the political bravo who now sat in Peel's place, on Peel's principles, had stabbed Peel's reputation with calumny's poisoned dagger, had broken his power, had hounded on his foes.

Mr. Herbert began by exposing the utter falsehood of Mr. Disraeli's statement that the Protectionist party had never sought to reverse the legislation of 1846. He pointed out the gigantic agitation which the party had carried on since the adoption of Free Trade, at "market tables, in theatres, at Protection societies, one hundred in number." ‡

"For my part," he went on with just scorn, "I acquit the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, as far as his own convictions are concerned, of the charge of having ever been a protectionist. I never for one moment thought he believed in the least degree in Protection. I do not accuse him of having

* *Ibid.* 538-540, and 548-9. † Hansard, 3 S. cxxxiii. 603.

‡ See *ante*, 271.

forgotten what he said or what he believed in those years. I only accuse him of having forgotten now what he then wished it to appear that he believed."*

Then he quoted passages from the speeches of all the Protectionist leaders,—Lord Derby, Lord George Bentinck, the Marquis of Granby,—in which the restoration of Protection was distinctly laid down as the basis of the party, and proved that these opinions had been backed up by Mr. Disraeli, who had just now had the coolness to deny that he or his friends had ever sought to reverse Free Trade.† And, then, towards the close of his speech, he delivered against Mr. Disraeli the following piece of invective—one of the most powerful, one of the most righteous invectives in political oratory :—

"Sir, I think the memory of Sir Robert Peel stands on a pedestal, from which no counter-Motion, even if it could be carried in this House, could remove it. I knew Sir Robert Peel during my whole life almost—I admired him as a politician—I followed him as a leader —and I loved the man. He was a man, mind you, susceptible—proud, and justly proud, of the purity of his motives—jealous of his honour. I sat by him night by night on that bench when he was attacked by the foulest language, and accused of the meanest crimes. But Sir Robert Peel was a man of a generous nature—he was one who never rejoiced in the humiliation of an adversary ; and he would have recollected this—that the humiliation, if humiliation it were, was a

* *Ibid.* 603-4. † *Ibid.* 605-607.

humiliation to be inflicted not only upon those who had assailed him, but also on Gentlemen for whose character he had the warmest regard. I don't confound hon. Gentlemen opposite, with those who calumniated Sir Robert Peel. I recollect, even at the moment when party strife was embittered to the uttermost—when men's passions rose high—when great disappointment was felt at the course Sir Robert Peel had taken—even at that moment there were hon. Gentlemen opposite who continued a general support to his Government, and who never, when they opposed this very Bill, either threw a doubt upon his motives or assailed his integrity. I say, then, that the memory of Sir Robert Peel requires no vindication—his memory is embalmed in the grateful recollection of the people of this country; and I say, if ever retribution is wanted—for it is not words that humiliate, but deeds—if a man wants to see humiliation—which, God knows, is always a painful sight—he need but look there,"—and then, suiting the action to the word, Mr. Herbert pointed to the bench on which Mr. Disraeli sat as Chancellor of the Exchequer.*

The effect was most dramatic. The Liberals cheered; the Peelites cheered; the remnant of the Protectionists cheered; and the followers of Mr. Disraeli himself were painfully dumb. And Mr. Disraeli himself!—all eyes were turned towards him: before him stood the friend of Peel, like the image of Nemesis, proclaiming his shame; and all around he could hear the cheers that told him of his discovered imposture. These shouts,

Ibid. 612-13

piercing to his inner ear, revealed to him that he stood forth before these men in his true colours—vindictive, utterly selfish, wholly unscrupulous, of petty ends and most despicable means—a false foe, a falser friend.

And—if he were an ordinary man—what images ought Mr. Herbert's speech to have called up before his conscience before which to blush and tremble! Before his inner eye there ought to have passed the reproachful shade of Peel whom he had stabbed in the back; the beckoning form of Bentinck pointing to the bond of personal and political fidelity, to which he had a hundred times sworn, and which now he forswore; and the thousands of hapless farmers whom for years he had encouraged by every art—by flattery of their basest passions, and their wildest unreason, by all the resources of his witty, eloquent, luring tongue—to support that cause he was now abandoning. Such, I say, would have been the reflections that would have painfully crowded on the mind of any ordinary man, wrung his heart, brought blushes to his cheeks, tears to his eyes. But Mr. Disraeli sat in his seat, unmoved, immovable, without sign of sorrow or shame. In that callous heart these was no room for remorse; in that self-adoring nature there was no place for self-reproach; that face of brass could betray no shame. This "being, reckless of all things save his own prosperity," could spare no thought for the wrongs of others, living or dead. Their wounded feelings, their betrayed friendship, their deserted interests, added but zest to the cynic adventurer to whom all these

things had paved the way to fame and power. There he sat—Cabinet Minister, Chancellor of the Exchequer, leader of the House of Commons. Not memories of Peel, or Bentinck, not the angry menace of the farmer, not the flashing words of Herbert, nor the loud shouts of contempt around, could undo *that*. Never perhaps was Mr. Disraeli's mood more exultant. Let them rave themselves hoarse—let them shout at him words of hate, contempt, disgust,—high above all their din rose the organ-peal of his own measureless egotism, gratified sublimely; in his ears the only notes audible were those that played that sweetest of all melodies—that he had reached wealth, power, fame,—that he had realized his boyhood's dream, and his life ideal of supreme imposture, supremely successful.

When the final division came, the Liberals, Peelites, Mr. Disraeli and his friends, all went into the same lobby against Protection, and together made up 468 votes. The minority numbered but 53.* It is not unamusing nor uninstructive to read over the list of this small band, that still remained faithful, when all were faithless, to the cause of Protection. Prominent among them are those very men whose vote against Peel, in the division which overthrew that statesman, Mr. Disraeli described with dithyrambic and pathetic eulogy in his life of Lord George Bentinck. Captain Somerset and Mr. Bentinck, Mr. Miles and Mr. Yorke, Mr. Newdegate and Alderman Thompson, are figures in the pages of Protection's inspired historian, aud are likewise

* Hansard, 3 S. cxxiii. 701.

among those who found themselves, in the change of the seasons, at the same time the friends of Protection and the enemies of Mr. Disraeli.* How that gentleman, under his impassive exterior, was chuckling from head to foot over their cheated faith and their gloomy faces! This ragged regiment, this forlorn hope, this dejected and powerless band, were those he—*he*, the leader of the House—had been obliged to grossly flatter a few short years before! Surely the stars were fighting on Mr. Disraeli's side!

So Mr. Disraeli rode triumphant over his first great difficulty; but the moment was close at hand when he would have to fight a sterner battle and less merciful foes. His Budget was looked forward to with intense interest. The report had got abroad—he himself being most industrious in circulating it—that he had so arranged the finances of the country as to produce a Budget which would silence the groans of the farmers, without raising the ire of the Free Traders. He was, in fact, to come before the House a magician, a heaven-born financier, who would reconcile the most opposed interests, evoke blessings from his friends, loving embraces from his foes; and join all mankind in the bonds of a common love for Mr. Disraeli's finance, and an emulous adoration of Mr. Disraeli himself.

At last (Dec. 4) the eventful day came. Mr. Disraeli took upwards of five hours in expounding his Budget, and, although he wearied his audience, produced on the whole rather a good effect. His statement was prolix,

* *Ibid.* 704.

but at the same time clear, and he showed that to some extent he had managed to acquaint himself with the details of the revenue of the country.*

The Budget may best be described as a compilation of different schemes, which was meant to please all parties. On the one hand, he deserted the Protectionists and conciliated the Free Traders; and, on the other, abandoned the Free Traders and took up the cause of the Protectionists. With merciless sarcasm he dismissed many of the grievances of which he had been for many years the loud-mouthed advocate. It will be remembered that for session after session he had declared that Free Trade had ruined the colonial growers of sugar. With the utmost calmness he now asserted that the colonial grower had no grievance at all; that, instead of being ruined, the demand for his sugar had been considerably increased, and that he had practically displaced the foreign sugar merchant from the market. And in dealing with this part of his subject, he dismissed his own inconsistency on the question with a jaunty ease which excited loud laughter from the Liberal benches.†

* "It was well done," writes Macaulay, "both as to manner and language. The statement was lucid, though much too long. I could have said the whole as clearly, or more clearly, in two hours; and Disraeli was up five. The plan was nothing but taking money out of the pockets of the people in towns, and putting it into the pockets of growers of malt. I greatly doubt whether he will be able to carry it, but he has raised his reputation for practical ability."—*Trevelyan's Life of Macaulay*, 2nd ed., ii. 334.

† Hansard, 3 S. cxxiii. 847-850. "I may," said Mr. Disraeli, "be called traitor, I may be called renegade; but I want to know whether there is any gentleman in this House, wherever he may sit, who would recommend a differential duty to prop up a prostrate industry which

In a similar manner he dealt with the various items of agricultural distress on which he had made numberless motions and speeches as leader of the Protectionists in opposition. The grievances of the land he placed in three categories—the highway rate, the county rate, and the poor rate.* The highway rate he practically dismissed in a prospective Act of Parliament, of the provisions of which he was careful to say nothing.† As to the county rate, it was only £800,000, and should be left alone.‡ The alleged grievance of the poor-rate was even more promptly dismissed. The charge for the poor had decreased by 25 per cent. since 1849. The amount, Mr. Disraeli confessed, amid the loud cheers of the Opposition, which in 1848 was £6,180,000, had fallen in the last return to £4,962,000.§ As a natural consequence, Mr. Disraeli, of course, was "not prepared to recommend any change in the present system of raising the local taxation of the country." ‖

Having thus completely abandoned the ground he had formerly occupied with regard to the Free Traders, he thought it time to say something on behalf of the

is actually commanding the metropolitan market, under the circumstances which I have placed before Parliament."—*Ibid.* 850. Who would think that this gentleman, who assumes this air of sweetly childlike ingenuousness, was the ruthless assailant in the past, whose mouth the words "traitor" and "renegade" always filled, when other ministers were acting exactly as he was acting now?

* *Ibid.* 855.

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Ibid.* 857. Hansard reports that this announcement was received with "sensation."—*Ibid.*

§ *Ibid.* 857-8.

‖ *Ibid.* 861.

agriculturists. Slily remarking that it was the principle of Free Trade to reduce the taxation on all articles of primary consumption, he proposed to reduce the malt tax by one-half.* Then came the description of the means by which he proposed to made up for the deficiency of two and a half millions which this reduction of the malt tax created. The income tax was brought down to incomes of £100 a year on ordinary and of £50 a year on landed property;† and on the schedules there was an alternative scale of 7*d.* and 5¼*d.* in the pound.‡ Further, the house tax was made to extend from houses of £20 to those of £10, in addition to which, its amount was doubled.§

After the compliments of the first night on the unexpected lucidity and sobriety of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's scheme had passed, the public began to examine his proposals more closely, and scarcely ever was there a Budget against which more damaging charges could be made. In the first place, there was the objection that the reduction of the malt tax, whilst seriously interfering with the revenue, would really confer no practical benefit on the consumer. Then, fault was justly found with the enormous increase of direct taxation, and the blunders in the arrangement of the income tax were shown to be almost inconceivably gross.

Another of the almost incredible blunders of which the Chancellor of the Exchequer was guilty was that he put down a sum of £400,000, which was really a debt of

* *Ibid.* 865.
† *Ibid.* 887.
‡ *Ibid.* 888.
§ *Ibid.* 905.

the State, as being to its credit,* and the result was that whereas he counted on a surplus, he really left a deficiency. This melancholy result was the more remarkable, as, when Mr. Disraeli took the revenues in hand, he had a surplus in his favour. In fact, Mr. Disraeli's Budget was a thoroughly unworkmanlike production, and there was not a financier in the House who had a word to say in its favour. It was criticised with crushing effect by Sir Charles Wood on behalf of the Whigs, by Mr. Cobden as leader of the Free Traders, and by Sir James Graham on the part of the Peelites. The discussion had scarcely begun when it became evident that the faults of the Budget had arrayed against Mr. Disraeli nearly every section of the House. Mr. Disraeli made a characteristic attempt to escape from his impending fate. The first resolution which came before the House on the Budget was that which dealt with the house tax. Mr. Disraeli was several times interrogated as to what would be the result if this resolution were defeated. For a long time he endeavoured so to put the resolution that it would pledge the House to nothing, and so have no effect

* Mr. Disraeli calculated that he would have a surplus of £400,000. In making out this, he reckoned an exactly similar sum—£400,000—which he was to receive as repayment of money lent by the State for public works. The State, to lend this money, had first itself to borrow it. When it got back the £400,000, therefore, it simply received from its debtor the sum in which it was indebted to another person. Mr. Disraeli, however, committed the extraordinary error of considering this debt of the State, as a sum to the credit of the State! (See Mr. Gladstone's speech, Hansard, 3 S. cxxiii. 1234.) What would be thought of a cashier at 30*s.* a week who committed a similar mistake?

whatever on the position of the Ministry. He wanted to leave himself quite open to accept the opinion of the House, whatever it might be,—whether they should agree with him that the change should be an increase, or demanded that it should be a decrease, or even if they should come to the conclusion that the tax should remain as it was. The Opposition, however, were not to be put off thus. After a hundred twists and turns, Mr. Disraeli remained pledged to his own proposition of an increased house tax, and on this motion he was also obliged to stake the success or the failure of his whole Budget.

Brought to bay on the third night of the debate, he sought refuge in violent invective. Unable to answer Sir Charles Wood (now Lord Halifax), he took the trouble to inform that gentleman that "petulance is not sarcasm, and that insolence is not invective." *

Turning next on Sir James Graham, whose exposure of his Budget had been equally destructive, he described him as a man whom "I will not say I greatly respect, but rather whom I greatly regard," † and finally he attacked his opponents *en masse*.

"Yes!" he exclaimed; "I know what I have to face. I have to face a coalition. The combination may be successful. A coalition has before this been successful. But coalitions, though successful, have always found this, that their triumph has been brief. This, too, I know, that England does not love coalitions. I appeal from the coalition to that public opinion which

* *Ibid.* 1653. † *Ibid.* 1655-6.

governs this country—to that public opinion whose mild and irresistible influence can control even the decrees of Parliaments, and without whose support the most august and ancient institutions are but 'the baseless fabric of a vision.'" *

Before I give the crushing—the cruelly crushing—reply which this speech received, I may draw the reader's attention to the fact that Mr. Disraeli, in declaiming, with such an assumption of sincerity, against coalitions, was denouncing the preaching and practice of his own life. His first political scheme, he himself has told us, was to procure a coalition between the Tories and the Radicals; and he afterwards tried to bring about a coalition of the Tories with the Chartists. But á more remarkable proof that he did not always regard coalitions with the loathing which he now professed, was supplied by his conduct towards Peel. Peel, it will be remembered, was driven from office on a decisive division, such as that to which Mr. Disraeli was now approaching, by a coalition between the Liberals and the Protectionists. One of the main supporters, if not the very originator, it has been seen, of this momentous coalition, was the very man who was denouncing all coalitions as wicked, unconstitutional, and un-English! It will afterwards, too, be found that Mr. Disraeli made the most successful use of coalition; and on three occasions in succession was raised by coalition to power!

After Mr. Disraeli had resumed his seat, Mr. Glad-

* *Ibid.* 1065-6.

stone jumped to his feet, and a scene of wild excitement ensued.

"I am reluctant, Mr. Patten," said he, "to trespass upon the attention of the Committee, but it appears to me that the speech which we have just heard is a speech that ought to meet with a reply, and that, too, on the moment; and, Sir, I begin by telling the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer that—I postpone for some minutes the inquiry whether he knows his business or not, that there are some things which he, too, has yet to learn. There were other reasons, besides the reason of triviality and irrelevancy, why a discussion should have been avoided to night by the right hon. Gentleman on the subject of emigration. And I tell the right hon. Gentleman more—that the license of language he has used—the phrases he has applied to the characters of public men—(*loud cries of* 'Hear, hear!')—that the phrases he has applied to the characters of public men, whose career—(*the remainder of the sentence was drowned in renewed cries from both sides of the House*).

"Mr. Patten, my wish is to keep myself,—although I confess that I could not hear those phrases used and remain totally unmoved,—my wish is to keep myself strictly within the bounds of Parliamentary order and propriety; and I beg of you, Sir, that if in one syllable I trespass beyond those bounds, you will have the kindness to correct me. I do not address myself to those Gentlemen belonging to the great party opposite, from whom I have never received anything but courtesy and

forbearance—(*interruption*),—but, notwithstanding the efforts of some Gentlemen in a remote corner of the House, who avail themselves of darkness to interrupt me, I will tell them this, that they must bear to have their Chancellor of the Exchequer, who is so free in his comments upon the conduct of others, brought to the bar of the opinion of this Committee, and tried by those laws of decency and propriety—(*cheers and confusion, which drowned the remainder of the sentence*). Sir, we are accustomed here to attach to the words of a Minister of the Crown a great authority—and that disposition to attach authority, as it is required by the public interest, so it has been usually justified by the conduct and character of those Ministers; but I must tell the right hon. Gentleman that he is not entitled to charge with insolence men who—(*renewed cheers again drowned the remaining words of the sentence*). I must tell the right hon. Gentleman that he is not entitled to say to my right hon. Friend the Member for Carlisle (Sir J. Graham) that he regards him, but that he does not respect him. I must tell the right hon. Gentleman that, whatever he has learned—and he has learned much,—he has not yet learned the limits of discretion, of moderation, and of forbearance, that ought to restrain the conduct and language of every Member of this House, the disregard of which is an offence in the meanest amongst us, but it is of tenfold weight when committed by the leader of the House of Commons." *

* *Ibid.* 1666-7.

Then Mr. Gladstone examined the different proposals of Mr. Disraeli in one of the most masterly speeches which he ever delivered on a financial subject. He tracked the Chancellor of the Exchequer through all the parts of his scheme, exposed blunder after blunder, proved that in many cases the classes whom Mr. Disraeli proposed to serve, his schemes would as a matter of fact deeply injure; and altogether crushed that hapless gentleman's Budget as completely as a Nasmyth hammer might crush a bandbox.

When the division came, 286 voted in favour of Mr. Disraeli's proposal, and 305 against, the Government being thus defeated by a majority of 15. A few days afterwards they resigned.

Thus ended the first Derby-Disraeli Government. It had never perhaps been the misfortune of this country to be ruled by a Ministry more unprincipled, and never perhaps during any period of English history were the dictates of representative and party government, of personal and political consistency and honour, violated so grossly, so openly, and on such a large scale. Coming into office pledged to restore Protection, they at first refused to bring the question before Parliament; then for months they uttered the most contradictory opinions upon it; and when the general election came, they allowed their supporters to profess opinions the most opposite on the great and central controversy of the day. Finally, asking the country for a policy, instead of placing one before it, as is the duty of a parliamentary government, they found the tide turn against

their first political principles ; then they abandoned those principles with unblushing readiness, without any apology for past errors, without any repentance for past injustice to the cause and the upholders of Free Trade. To find a similar instance of political tergiversation, we must look to subsequent political developments of Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli.

CHAPTER XIV.

"A PATRIOTIC OPPOSITION."

Up to the present period, I have been dealing with what may be called Lord Beaconsfield's ancient history. I now come to a period more modern, and therefore less unfamiliar.

My plan of dealing with my subject, will, therefore, be somewhat altered. I shall, unless when the occasion is very interesting and important, give a rapid and general, instead of a detailed view, of the career I am describing.

The Government of Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli was succeeded by a coalition ministry, which included Peelites and Whigs. The Earl of Aberdeen, the chief of the former party, was made Prime Minister; Lord John Russell became Foreign, Lord Palmerston Home Secretary; Mr. Gladstone was made Chancellor of the Exchequer; and Sir James Graham First Lord of the Admiralty.

So hopeless was the *fiasco* in which Mr. Disraeli's first tenure of the Chancellorship of the Exchequer had ended, that for a time it was widely reported that

he was about to resign his position and once more take a tour in the East. So loud and persistent did those rumours become, that at last Mr. Disraeli had to instruct the *Times* to publish an official denial, to the effect that Mr. Disraeli never had less intention than at that particular moment of absenting himself from Parliament. The session had but begun when he made a speech of some two hours' length on our relations with France, strongly advocating a close alliance with the Emperor Napoleon.* Of the remainder of his actions during this session of 1853 it is unnecessary to say more than a few words. He joined in the opposition to some of Mr. Gladstone's financial reforms, and in doing so took the opportunity of defending once again the proposals of his own Budget;† and he asked, in his official capacity as leader of the House of Commons, occasional questions in reference to the rising troubles which culminated in the Crimean war. As yet, however, the clouds were but on the distant horizon: in the next two sessions the quarrel between England and Russia was in full progress; and the chief point of interest in the conduct of Mr. Disraeli, as in that of all our other statesmen during that period, is in reference to his action on that great conflict.

During the controversy which took place on the Russo-Turkish war, one of the questions most frequently and hotly debated was the attitude which should be observed by an Opposition in face of a Government

* Annual Register, xcv. 9—11. † *Ibid.*

dealing with supremely important and extremely difficult matters of foreign policy. The doctrine was laid down by some of the more extreme partisans of the Government, that an Opposition should remain absolutely dumb, and should agree to everything the Cabinet proposed, without asking for any information as to the facts or the arguments on which the policy was based. The Ministers were not content with re-echoing the words of their rabid admirers: they gave the far more substantial mark of their approval of those views by putting them into practice. They even went further; for they not only carried the doctrines of their obsequious adherents into realisation, but they pushed those doctrines to lengths which were not dreamt of, even in the philosophy of those admirers. They were not satisfied with thinking that an Opposition ought to support everything a Government does, but they thought an Opposition ought not to be afforded even the opportunity of making a choice; the most important ministerial acts were all *faits accomplis* before the Opposition heard anything about them, and consequently after their approval or censure could be of any avail.

Some justification for such conduct was frequently sought in the action of the Opposition during the Crimean war. It was pointed out how, throughout the whole of that terrible crisis in the history of our country, Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli maintained an attitude of the most benevolent, most Christian, most patriotic indulgence to the thousand faults and errors

of the Government; how, when their hearts were filled with patriotic anguish and their tongues barbed with effective epigrams, they, by a mighty effort of self-control, persistently, obstinately, heroically, held their peace. Such is the picture which the Conservative imagination drew of Mr. Disraeli's conduct during the years 1854, 1855, and 1856. I proceed to give a sketch (it can only be a sketch) of what Mr. Disraeli really did say and do: the facts and Conservative imaginings will not be found to completely correspond.

About three weeks after the assembling of Parliament in 1854, on February 17th, Mr. Layard called attention to the conduct of the Ministry, accusing them of want of vigour in opposing Russia and in defending Turkey.* Sir James Graham, challenging the Opposition to a direct vote of want of confidence, denounced such attacks as weakening the hands of the Government.† Mr. Disraeli, however, was of quite a different opinion; strongly supported Mr. Layard, and sharply criticised Sir James Graham.‡ A few days afterwards —on the 20th, after the adjourned debate had been resumed—the leader of the Opposition again joined heartily in the assault on the Ministers. What he

* In the course of this speech Mr. Layard "controverted the assertion that Turkey was not worth defending, declaring that the Turks had advanced more in fifteen years than the Russians had done in a hundred and fifty, and that the Ottoman empire was rapidly improving in wealth and commerce, in the liberality of its Government, the intelligence of its people, and all other elements of strength." —*Annual Register*, xcvi. 31.

† Annual Register, xcvi. 33.

‡ *Ibid.* 35-6.

most objected to was that, owing to the reticence of the Government, the country did not know what it was really going to war about.* He also, like Mr. Layard, was shocked at what he considered some signs of lukewarmness in the love of the Ministry for the Turks. To him it appeared a matter of bitter complaint that the Turks should be "lectured" on the "necessity for internal and commercial reform." This amounted to a "hint that the Porte should comply with the demands of Russia": the Government interfered, in fact, with "the independence of the Porte" "by the insolent character of their friendly dictation." † Reviewing the entire conduct of the Ministry, he declared it to have been influenced throughout by "credulity or connivance;" ‡ and before he sat down, he expressed himself shocked by a declaration of Mr. Gladstone that "the condition of Turkey was full of anxiety, misery, and perplexity." §

By March it had become evident that a conflict with Russia was inevitable; and, in fact, on the 22nd of that month the Queen sent a message to both Houses containing a declaration of war. On March 21, that is to say, on the very day previous to this declaration, it was the duty of Mr. Gladstone, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, to propose to the House a resolution for

* "Mr. Disraeli . . . . commenced his speech by saying that the people of this country should not, as in the last great European war, be ignorant why they were going to war, believing that a full knowledge upon the subject would dispose them to bear the necessary burdens more willingly."—*Annual Register*, xcvi. 39.

† *Ibid.* 40. ‡ *Ibid.* § *Ibid.*

doubling the income tax. Mr. Gladstone further asked that the doubled income tax should in the first instance be levied for only six months of the coming financial year. To this proposal Sir Henry Willoughby submitted an amendment, the effect of which would be to extend the raising of the additional tax over the whole year in place of the first six months. Mr. Disraeli gave to this attack upon the financial proposals of the Government a most vehement support; and he took an opportunity to pass upon the Government a general and scathing indictment. He declared that the war was simply a creation of divided opinions in the Cabinet; and he described the conduct of the Government as marked "by vacillation, by perplexity, by fitfulness, by timidity, and by occasional violence." *

"It is," he exclaimed, "a coalition war. (Cheers.) Rival opinions, contrary politics, and discordant systems have produced that vacillation and perplexity, that at last you are going to war with an opponent who does not want to fight, and you are unwilling to encounter him. (Cheers.) What a mess for a great country! (Cheers.) And this brought about by the splendid administrative talents of the gentlemen opposite. . . . . The financial *faux pas* of the Chancellor of the Exchequer may soon be forgotten, and even forgiven. What is the value of his conversion scheme . . . . to this terrible prospect of war, brought about by the combination of geniuses opposite me, and brought about absolutely by the amount of their talents and

* Annual Register, xcvi. 164.

the discordancy of their opinions? (Cheers and laughter.)" *

But the most remarkable feature of the speech was that, while thus drawing a picture of the enormous task on which the Government had entered, and their equally enormous incapacity for conducting it properly, he declined to place before the House a vote of no confidence in them.

"I tell them again," he says, endeavouring to escape from the difficulty by a dexterous play upon words,—a play upon words in the midst of a stupendous national crisis!—"I tell them again, I will not propose a vote of no confidence in men who prove to me every hour that they have no confidence in each other." †

Next, having declared that he had "tried" the Government upon the greatest of all questions—the question of peace or war—he declared he would try them upon other questions "almost equally great." Then he went on to denounce their conduct in not carrying out their intention of dealing with the question of reforming the franchise.‡ In fact, there never was a more slashing or more contemptuous attack made

* *Ibid.* 165.

† *Ibid.* Mr. Gladstone gave a splendid retort to this flimsy pretence: "Ought a vote of want of confidence to be spared on the ground that ministers have 'no confidence in each other'?"—the strongest conceivable reason for moving such a vote. "I tell the right hon. Gentleman this, that if I had possessed his great powers of oratory, and had held his position in this House, I would rather have forfeited both than, after making such an elaborate argument, have conducted it to such a recreant conclusion."—*Ibid.* 166.

‡ *Ibid.*

upon the Ministry than that made by Mr. Disraeli on the very morning of the day—for Mr. Disraeli's speech did not conclude till after midnight,*—on which the greatest English war of our time was declared.

On May 31, when the House met to agree upon a reply to the royal declaration of war, Mr. Disraeli was careful, while admitting the prerogative of the Crown to declare war, and while describing the time as inopportune for entering into matters of policy, to again make a general attack upon the Government, and especially upon Lord Aberdeen, its head.† And the hostility to Mr. Gladstone's financial proposals was continued by Mr. Disraeli and his followers with almost uninterrupted persistence until all these proposals had been disposed of.

On May 15, Mr. Wilson, on behalf of Mr. Gladstone, —who was absent on account of a domestic affliction,— proposed an increase of the malt tax from 2*s.* 9*d.* to 4*s.* Mr. Cayley's amendment that the Bill should be read a second time that day six months was supported by all the eloquence of the Opposition. Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton made a dashing speech. Sir John Pakington backed him up, and there were besides orations from the minor luminaries of the Tory party. This attack upon the Government at such a crisis was so keen as to call forth a sharp rebuke from Mr. Drummond, a very able, though eccentric member of the Conservative party, who declared that the Opposition, while it approved of the war, now "wanted to shrink from the realities." "The Opposition," he con-

* *Ibid.* 166. † *Ibid.* 67.

tinued, "would lead the Minister into a mess, but would never get him out of it.* And Lord John Russell, too, denounced this unwillingness to supply the Government with the means of carrying on the war at the same time that the Opposition professed to consider the war just and necessary.

"Don't tell me," said Lord John, "that the landed interests cannot bear 15*d.* additional duty upon malt. Tell me . . . that you are in favour of the war, that you are ready to vote increases to the army and to the navy, but that you are not ready to pay the necessary taxes to defray the expenses. Tell me that you shrink from the unpopularity which belongs to any proposal to lay considerable burdens on the country. ('Oh, oh!' *from the Opposition.*)" †

Mr. Disraeli was prompt in defending his friends from this attack, and he denounced as an extremely dangerous doctrine of finance "that the Opposition, if they approved the war, were bound to vote for any proposal for a new tax without criticism or cavil." ‡ It appeared to him, on the contrary, that the more discussion there was the better; and that the sight of those differences of opinion, instead of weakening the authority of the country in the eyes of her "Imperial foe," would rather tend to give it strength.§

* *Ibid.* 182.

† *Ibid.* 183.

‡ *Ibid.* 184.

§ *Ibid.* 185. "In my opinion," he said, "it is better that our foes should see that sums so vast as these—greater than those furnished by the largest provinces of our Imperial foe—should be frankly dis-

Again, on May 22, when Mr. Gladstone proposed the raising of £2,000,000 by Exchequer bonds, an amendment of Mr. Baring was supported by Mr. Disraeli in an extremely bitter speech against the Government generally, and Mr. Gladstone personally.*

Immediately after this came another and more bitter and more unexpected attack on the Ministry. On the 29th of May the Attorney-General announced the withdrawal of the Canterbury Bribery Prevention Bill. This was but one of the many measures the Ministry were compelled to abandon after their introduction. The absorbing importance of foreign affairs, the overwhelming interest of a great war, left little time and less inclination for the discussion of domestic questions. The ill-success of the Ministry with their measures was due to their refusal to accept facts, and to their endeavour to be as legislatively active in the midst of a gigantic conflict as might have been possible in days of peace.

Mr. Disraeli took advantage of the Attorney-General's simple announcement to make the liveliest and perhaps most bitter attack he had yet delivered against the Ministry. The indictment came evidently upon the

cussed; in my opinion it is better, rather than see sums given in the churlish, undignified, and unmannerly manner in which the Government attempts to filch this measure, that our foes should see that we exercise our functions as representatives of the people, and that, while prepared to support even a Government to which we are opposed, we will to the utmost do our duty to our constituencies, to see that the ways and means may be adjusted according to the principles of eternal justice."

* *Ibid.* 187-8.

House as a surprise, for the occasion did not seem to invite any such action. In other words, Mr. Disraeli, in assailing the Government, did not take advantage of a favourable and natural opportunity, but he actually was so anxious to deliver his soul of his complaint that he sought an opportunity, and was careless of the fact that the mode and period of his attack were both unusual. Enumerating with skill the list of the Bills which the Ministry had brought in and had afterwards abandoned, he repeated his sarcasm upon the incapacity of the Government "administered by men remarkably distinguished for ability"—(laughter)—"men," he went on, "who have made enormous sacrifices for their country, and for themselves (great laughter and much cheering)."*

He next proceeded to make a personal attack upon Lord John Russell, and to accuse him of having, in his eagerness for fame, formed a coalition with those to whom he had been bitterly opposed during his entire career.†

Lord John Russell was provoked into a bitter reply by this unexpected assault, and pointed out how Mr. Disraeli was seeking for an opportunity to embarrass the Government. He alluded to the reiterated hostility shown to the measures which Mr. Gladstone proposed

* Annual Register, xcvi. 126.

† "No man," said Mr. Disraeli, "has made greater sacrifices than the noble Lord." (Laughter.) "He has thrown overboard all his friends and colleagues, and has connected himself with a *coterie* of public men who have passed a great part of their lives in depreciating the abilities of the noble Lord and running down his eminent career. (Loud laughter and ironical cheers.)"—*Ibid.*

for supplying the ways and means, and he wound up with a very severe attack upon Mr. Disraeli's action in reference to the Bill for admitting the Jews to Parliament. This part of Lord John Russell's speech led to a good deal of recrimination, but as he seems to have laboured under a mistake I need not dwell upon it.*

The moment Lord John sat down Mr. Disraeli once more stood up and renewed with even greater vehemence his previous attack. He accused the Government of clinging to office notwithstanding their failure to carry so many of their measures; corrected his former statement that they had been guilty of "credulity *or* connivance" by saying that he thought they were now guilty of "connivance *and* credulity;" and wound up by repeating his charge against Lord John Russell of joining with former foes for the mere purpose of holding office.†

So ferocious was this attack that Colonel, afterwards General Peel, one of the most respectable of Mr. Disraeli's own supporters, intervened, and denounced moderately, but effectively, such an unpatriotic attempt to bring the Government into ridicule.‡

Thus I have shown that Mr. Disraeli in this session

* *Ibid.* 127-8.

† *Ibid.* 128-30.

‡ Colonel Peel said: "Though perfectly free and unbiassed by party feeling, he entertained Conservative opinions which rendered it impossible for him to give his support to the present Government, but still he would never be a party to such attacks as that which had been made upon the noble Lord to-night. Such attacks only tended

of 1854, in place of avoiding any embarrassment of the Government, seized every single opportunity of making the most vehement and bitter attacks upon them. And this, be it remembered, although he practically agreed that the war they waged was a just war.

On but one other of the questions discussed during this session is it necessary for me to take any notice of Mr. Disraeli's action. Among the Bills introduced by Lord John Russell was one for a change in the oaths required of Members of Parliament on taking their seats in the House. The Bill contained one clause—the fifth—which would have enabled Jews to sit in Parliament without taking a Christian oath. But besides this, there were other clauses which relieved Roman Catholics from swearing to declarations offensive to their religious feelings. The fifth clause was the one most obnoxious to the Tory party. It was bitterly opposed by Lord Derby. Sir Frederick Thesiger proposed the rejection of the measure in the House of Commons, and the main body of the Tory party backed up the opposition. Mr. Disraeli, in order to throw a sop to the wretched bigotry of his partisans, actually condescended to oppose the Bill; offering the paltry and false excuse that, because it released the

to weaken the Government in carrying on a war which he cordially approved, and, so far from believing the Government had been guilty either of credulity, connivance, or collusion, he gave them his entire support in everything they had done in connection with the war; and both with regard to their financial measures and every other arrangement, they might rely upon every assistance he could render them."—*Hansard*, 3 S. cxxxiii. 1093.

Roman Catholics from offensive and futile oaths, it endangered the security of the Protestant religion.

Parliament, which had been prorogued in August, was suddenly called together on December 12, but it is not necessary to say much of Mr. Disraeli's action during the fortnight of its sitting. The leaders of the Opposition moved no amendment to the address, and professed a strong desire to do or say nothing which might give an appearance of a want of unanimity. This did not prevent both Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli, however, from entering into a very detailed criticism of the whole conduct of the Government. So violent, indeed, was Mr. Disraeli's attack that it provoked from Lord John Russell the statement that the speech did not contain "a germ of patriotism." *

When Parliament reassembled in 1855, the Opposition followed exactly the same tactics, and they were unexpectedly placed in a position to do so more effectively. The blame for the terrible blunders which had

* In the course of this speech, Mr. Disraeli was imprudent enough—to say the least of it—to rake up the attacks which Sir James Graham and Sir Charles Wood made upon the Emperor Napoleon, who was then, as is known, the ally of England in carrying on the war against Russia; and he said the Emperor's joining with us so zealously, after these attacks, in the war was a proof of the "generosity of that great man."—*Annual Register*, xcvi. 228. It was probably the evil effect this re-opening of old sores might have that prompted Lord John Russell's rejoinder. In the course of this speech also, Mr. Disraeli, in referring to an attack made before by Mr. Layard on the Ministry, described that gentleman as "a man of genius, who would be remembered when the greater portion of the existing Cabinet were forgotten."—*Ibid.* 227.

been committed in the management of the army had been laid, by the popular voice, chiefly on the shoulders of the Duke of Newcastle, the Minister for War. Lord John Russell, accepting this view, proposed to Lord Aberdeen that the Duke should be replaced by Lord Palmerston. The proposition was apparently staved off. As soon as the House of Commons met, Mr. Roebuck gave voice to the popular outcry against the administration of the army by proposing a committee of inquiry. Lord John Russell thereupon resigned, declaring that he could not resist such a proposal. Mr. Disraeli supported Mr. Roebuck's motion, and joined in the attack upon the Duke of Newcastle, at the same time declaring that the whole of the Government was responsible for the blunders of the war.* And then he denounced Lord John Russell's proposal that the Duke of Newcastle should be succeeded by Lord Palmerston as Minister for War as "profligate intrigue," † and he concluded by saying that he had no confidence whatever in the existing Administration. ‡

Mr. Roebuck's motion, as is known, was carried by a majority of 157 against the Ministry, and then Lord Derby, among other persons, was asked to attempt the formation of a new administration. It is not uninteresting to know that for some time there was supposed to be a possibility of a coalition Ministry, with Lord Derby, Lord Palmerston, Mr. Gladstone, and Mr. Disraeli among its members. The proposal, however, did not succeed, because of the refusal both of Lord

* *Ibid.* xcvii. 17—19. † *Ibid.* ‡ *Ibid.* 18.

Palmerston and Mr. Gladstone to accept office under Lord Derby. But it is not a little remarkable that these proposals for forming a coalition should come from those men who had spent years in denouncing a coalition which had overthrown their own Ministry, and which was the basis of the Government of Lord Aberdeen. Another interesting circumstance in connection with these negotiations is, that if they had succeeded, Mr. Disraeli would probably never have reached to the commanding position he afterwards attained. One of the conditions which Lord Derby offered as an inducement to Lord Palmerston to accept his proposal was that he should be the leader of the Ministry in the House of Commons. That, of course, implied the dethronement of Mr. Disraeli from the position of the first Conservative spokesman; and Mr. Disraeli, according to Lord Derby, professed himself quite willing to accept such an arrangement.* Finally, the negotiations for the formation of a new Government in which Lord John Russell and Lord Granville as well as the Earl of Derby had been engaged, issued in the formation of a Ministry under Lord Palmerston. To the new administration Mr. Disraeli was not more sparing than to that which had gone before. Lord

* "I was enabled," said Lord Derby, "by an act of self-abnegation and forbearance, for which I think my right hon. Friend deserves the highest credit, to state, upon the part of my right hon. Friend Mr. Disraeli, that with regard to the lead in the House of Commons, with which he had been honoured upon a former occasion, in the presence of the noble Viscount he would waive all claim to that position, and would willingly act under the direction of a statesman of the noble Viscount's ability and experience."—*Ibid.* 34.

Palmerston, on entering on office, accepted the Committee of Investigation proposed by Mr. Roebuck, and this step resulted in the resignation of Mr. Gladstone, Sir James Graham, and Mr. Sidney Herbert. Mr. Disraeli took advantage of this circumstance to make a general attack on the Government; and thus, curiously enough, although Mr. Disraeli had been willing to join an administration with Lord Palmerston as one of the leading Ministers, and as his own chief in the House of Commons, Lord Palmerston, just after he had taken office, was denounced by Mr. Disraeli with as much bitterness as his predecessors in power.*

In the course of this session, as everybody knows, negotiations were entered upon in Vienna for the purpose of seeing whether the war could be brought to a conclusion or not, Lord John Russell being the English representative at these conferences. The last formal sitting of this Congress took place on the 26th April. The public, however, were left uncertain as to whether this was to be considered the conclusion of its sittings, and, therefore, the termination of an attempt to put an end to hostilities, or whether the Congress was to be regarded as merely suspended, and negotiations for peace were still to go on. By the beginning of May Lord John Russell had returned to London, and questions immediately began to be asked in the House as to what was the real state of the negotiations in which he had taken such a prominent part. This

* "He"—Mr. Disraeli—"commented with great severity on the conduct and inconsistencies of Lord Palmerston."—*Ibid.* 53.

epoch in the war produced two motions hostile to the Government from two different quarters. On the one hand there was a motion of Mr. Milner Gibson on behalf of the peace party, which condemned the Government for not being sufficiently zealous in their endeavours to put an end to hostilities. On the other hand, Mr. Austin Layard, making himself the spokesman of the Turcophile party, proposed a resolution intended to force the Government into demanding large terms from Russia.

It was on the 11th May that Mr. Milner Gibson gave notice of his motion, while Mr. Austin Layard had placed his resolution on the table on the 27th April previously. Monday, May 21, was fixed for the discussion of one of those motions, and the House was crowded with members anxious to know what answer the Government were really prepared to make as to the important question whether all hope of a peaceful settlement was abandoned. Lord Palmerston, in reply to several questions, stated that the Vienna Conference was suspended but not closed; that the Government did not consider the means of pacification exhausted; that Austria was still furnished with the means of bringing about a peace, and that any propositions of Russia made through Austria would receive favourable consideration.* Mr. Gladstone, who at this period was of opinion that hostilities had gone on quite long enough, was satisfied with those answers, and thought they offered such fair hopes of a return

* *Ibid.* 107.

of peace, that he urged Mr. Milner Gibson to withdraw his motion. Mr. Disraeli, on the other hand, remained dissatisfied with the explanations of the Government, and demanded a more explicit statement from Lord Palmerston, declaring that the secrecy which the Premier maintained was meant to cover "mysterious and sinister operations" of his own.* Lord Palmerston pointed out the inconvenience of any further discussion at a moment when negotiations for peace could still be regarded as actually going on, and Lord John Russell stood up to confirm the Prime Minister's representation as to the Congress being suspended and not closed, and as to there still being room for the hope that peace might be restored by negotiations. Mr. Disraeli, however, was not to be deterred by any of these considerations from making an attack upon the Government. When Mr. Milner Gibson, in reply to the appeals of Mr. Gladstone, consented to postpone his motion until after the Whitsuntide recess, Mr. Disraeli at once stepped into the breach, declaring that he could not allow the House to break up without some further explanations. Accordingly he gave notice of a resolution condemning "the ambiguous language and uncertain conduct of Her Majesty's Government in reference to the great question of peace or war."† In defence of this extraordinary conduct, he declared that the time for forbearance and silence had passed. "The silence of the House," he said, "in 1853 had lowered

* *Ibid.* 107.
† *Ibid.* 108.

its character, and had not assisted in the preservation of peace."*

On the 24th May, then, Mr. Disraeli moved his resolution; and in supporting this motion he attacked Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell with the greatest bitterness.† A long debate ensued, and the strength of the disapproval with which his proposition was received will be estimated from the fact that it was rejected by a majority of 100: the numbers being 319 to 219. ‡

Subsequently to this, Lord John Russell fell into disrepute on account of discrepancies between his explanations in Parliament, and his conduct in Vienna. In all the violent attacks made upon him, Mr. Disraeli took a prominent part; § and on July 16th, when Lord John Russell announced his resignation, Mr. Disraeli assailed a speech of Lord Palmerston on the occasion as "reckless rhodomontade," and as "the patrician bullying of the Treasury Bench." ‖ It was not fit, he said, that Lord Palmerston should attempt to stop discussions by language which he would not use an unpar-

* *Ibid.* 108-9.

† *Ibid.* 109—111.

‡ Mr. Disraeli's chief objection to the despatch of Lord John Russell as our plenipotentiary to the Vienna Conference was that that statesman was pledged to bitterly anti-Russian views. He quoted the various speeches which Lord John Russell had made in favour of a decisive struggle with Russia, and also the disrespectful terms in which he had spoken of the Emperor of Russia personally; concluding with the remark, "This was the dove sent out upon the troubled waters."—*Ibid.* 110.

§ *Ibid.* 154.

‖ *Ibid.* 159.

liamentary epithet to describe, but not language which he expected "from one who is not only the leader of the House of Commons—which is an accident of life—but who is also a gentleman. (Great cheering.)" * And he wound up by declaring that Lord Palmerston had shown that night, "by his language and by the tone of his mind, that if the honour and interests of the country be any longer entrusted to his care, the first will be degraded and the last will be betrayed. (Loud cheers.)" †

The vote of censure on Lord Palmerston which Mr. Disraeli introduced gave rise to several amendments. Thus his motion led to lengthy discussions and several divisions, and it was not until June 8th that the matter was disposed of. The Government were supported by a large majority of the House, but they found bitter opponents in Mr. Bright, Mr. Cobden, and the peace party generally, and in Mr. Disraeli and his adherents. There is, let me remark parenthetically, a wide distinction between the opposition of the former and of Mr. Disraeli. The peace party regarded the time as already arrived for bringing the war to a conclusion, and, therefore, were justified in endeavouring to prevent the Government from continuing it. But between Mr. Disraeli and Lord Palmerston there was really no essential difference of policy, for the Prime Minister was quite as Russophobist as the leader of the Opposition, and, therefore, the charge of unfairly embarrassing the Government is justifiable against Mr. Disraeli,

* *Ibid.* 159-60. † *Ibid.* 160.

though it may not be against Messrs. Bright and Cobden.

It was on the 8th June, I have said, that the debates and attacks upon the Government, to which Mr. Disraeli gave rise, were concluded. On the following day, and, therefore, without any doubt in reference to the conduct of the Opposition and of Mr. Disraeli, the Prince Consort made his memorable speech at the Trinity House dinner,—that speech in which Constitutional Government was said to be on its trial, and the efforts to impede the Ministry in the midst of their enormous responsibilities were criticised as bitterly as the position of the speaker would permit.*

* He said, "If ever there was a time when the Queen's Government, by whomsoever conducted, required the support, ay, not the support alone, but the confidence, goodwill, and sympathy of their fellow-countrymen, it is the present. It is not the way to success in war to support it, however ardently and energetically, and to run down and weaken those who have to conduct it. We are engaged with a mighty adversary, who uses against us all those wonderful powers which have sprung up under the generating influence of our liberty and our civilization, and employs them with all the force which unity of purpose and action, impenetrable secrecy, and uncontrolled despotic power give him; whilst we have to meet him under a state of things intended for peace and the promotion of that very civilization, a civilization the offspring of public discussion, the friction of parties, and popular control over the government of the State. The Queen has no power to levy troops, and none at her command, except such as voluntarily offer their services. Her Government can entertain no measures for the prosecution of the war without having to explain them publicly in Parliament; her armies and fleets can make no movement, nor even prepare for any, without its being proclaimed by the press; and no mistake, however trifling, can occur, no weakness exist, which it may be of the utmost importance to conceal from the world, without its being publicly denounced, and even frequently exaggerated, with a morbid satisfaction. The

Notwithstanding this rebuke from so high a quarter, Mr. Disraeli joined heartily in the next onslaught upon the Government. On July 17th Mr. Roebuck proposed a motion founded on the report of the Sebastopol Committee. The motion attributed the sufferings of the army during the previous winter in the Crimea chiefly to the then Cabinet, and declared every member of that Cabinet, whose counsels led to such disastrous results, worthy of "severe reprehension." *

The Aberdeen Cabinet was that, as the reader knows, alluded to. Now, Lord Palmerston and nearly all his colleagues had been members of the Aberdeen Cabinet; and such a motion, accordingly, amounted to a vote of want of confidence in the existing Government.

Whatever view we take of Lord Palmerston and his policy, such a motion at such a time can only be regarded as unwise and unjust, inopportune and unpatriotic. The mistakes which it condemned were past and gone, and the Ministers—Lord Aberdeen and

Queen's ambassadors can carry on no negotiation which has not to be publicly defended by entering into all the arguments which a negotiator, to have success, must be able to shut up in the innermost recesses of his heart—nay, at the most critical moment, when the complications of military measures and diplomatic negotiations may be at their height, an adverse vote in Parliament may of a sudden deprive her of all her confidential servants. Gentlemen, constitutional government is under a heavy trial, and can only pass triumphantly through it if the country will grant its confidence—a patriotic, indulgent, and self-denying confidence—to Her Majesty's Government. Without this all their labours must be in vain."—*Irving*, 295.

* Annual Register, xcvii. 161.

the Duke of Newcastle,—who were chiefly responsible had been sacrificed. Lord Palmerston could scarcely be held responsible; and even if he could, he was now in the middle of a difficult and momentous struggle, and it was unfair to impede his course by those references to a dead past. This was the view taken by two of the most distinguished members of the Conservative party, and so strong was the feeling of these men upon the subject that they personally came forward to the defence of the Government by proposing the previous question. The mover of this amendment in favour of the Ministry was General Peel, afterwards the colleague of Mr. Disraeli, and Lord Robert Cecil, who is now known as the Marquis of Salisbury.* General Peel denounced the interference of the House with the Government, and Lord Robert Cecil characterised Mr. Roebuck's motion as wearing "the aspect of acrimonious and vindictive personality." † Mr. Disraeli, however, strongly supported Mr. Roebuck's motion.

I have now traced Mr. Disraeli's action through the whole Crimean war, and I have proved that he did not display that forbearance towards the Government which was claimed by his adherents during his own tenure of office, and which, in the imaginary history of past transactions supplied by Tory speakers, he was credited with having shown. I have proved that on every single occasion on which an attack was possible upon the Government, he was among the foremost assailants. I have shown that he proposed a vote of censure himself,

* *Ibid.* 162. † *Ibid.*

and supported every vote of censure that came from anybody else; and I have proved that all these motions he backed up with the most violent language. Having now laid the facts before the reader, I consider all further comment unnecessary.

The session of 1856 was not very important. The affairs of Italy were discussed more than once, and the encouragement which Lord Palmerston evidently was inclined to give Sardinia in endeavouring to unite that distracted country, was denounced by the Conservative leaders, and by none more vigorously than by Mr. Disraeli. In the course of one of his speeches he again attributed the attempts at Italian unity to secret societies;* and denounced English interference with Italian affairs as more likely to produce a worse state of things than before. On a previous occasion, when the estimates were being discussed, he had expressed similar views with regard to Italy, strongly condemning any encouragement of Sardinia for destroying Austrian authority in the Peninsula,† and he suggested no readier remedy for the evils of the country than the action of time.‡

At the close of the session, in giving an elaborate view of what had taken place, he made one statement in particular which subsequent events make interesting. Defining the difference between Conservative and Liberal principles, he declared him-

* *Ibid.* xcviii. 81.
† *Ibid.* 152.
‡ *Ibid.* 153.

self as a Conservative strongly against any further reduction of the franchise.*

The session of 1857 found Lord Palmerston involved in a war both with Persia and China. In the debate on the Address, Mr. Disraeli delivered a very remarkable speech on this state of circumstances. He denounced in strong terms the whole foreign policy of the Prime Minister. "Now, Sir," he said, summarising its effect, "it is a very remarkable fact that there is always a difficulty in our foreign affairs." †

He went in detail through every part of the policy he attacked, and found justification everywhere for such a judgment. He denied the right of Lord Palmerston to interfere in Italy, especially as he accused him of having made a secret treaty, the effect of which was to guarantee to Austria all her possessions. He was utterly shocked by this secret treaty. It was a "ruinous imposture on the credulity of the country." ‡ He passed in review our relations with Russia, and denounced in strong terms the Russophobia of Lord Palmerston. He described the efforts of the Minister to rouse a belligerent feeling against a country which meant no offence against us, and which was desirous of peace for the very good reason that

* "I hold," said he, "that to be a Conservative principle which regards the Parliamentary settlement of 1832 as a satisfactory settlement. I hold that to be a Conservative principle which, without any blind or bigoted adherence to the doctrine on all possible occasions, believes that tampering with the suffrage is a great evil to the State." —*Ibid.* 203-4.

† Hansard, 3 S. cxliv. 113.

‡ *Ibid.* 111

she was too exhausted to fight. Any difficulty that existed between us and that country he ascribed to blunders of Lord Clarendon at the Paris Congress; and he condemned with indignation the attempt to cover such a blunder by exciting ill-feeling between the two countries.* He scoffed at the charge of

* Mr. Disraeli first described Lord Clarendon being sent as a Plenipotentiary to Paris, in place of leaving our representation at the Congress to our Minister at Paris. "You would not even trust your Ambassador in Paris, . . . one of the leading members of the Cabinet, one of the principal Ministers of the Queen, should himself proceed to Paris to do that which you were determined to achieve. Well, he does go, and commits this awful mistake, which not being discovered at the time, he returns to this country with great honour, crowned with laurels." He then proceeded: "The mistake, of course, is at length discovered in the most natural manner possible —namely, by your late foes, to whom rights had been given by the treaty, asserting their rights; and instead of at once turning round and saying, 'Oh, there has been a mistake:' the people of England can never be satisfied with this arrangement; let us understand each other, . . . in a most conciliatory manner, and carry out our real intention—instead of that, every means are used to lash up the passions of the people of England. You are made to suppose that . . . our late foe . . . had absolutely endeavoured to defraud us of the legitimate consequences of our hard-earned victory, and in order that there should be no want of enthusiasm, and that the public should be prepared to enter into a renewed contest with Russia—this exhausted Russia, which was quite determined not to fight upon the question —the noble Lord (Lord Palmerston) goes down himself to the great capital of industry, peace, and cotton, harangues some of the most eminent members, I believe, of the Peace Society. . . . 'I will have no compromise,' said the First Minister of the Crown; 'I will have no explanation—not a word shall pass—I will have the treaty, the whole treaty, and nothing but the treaty.'—Russia, indeed, was prepared to give it to us. But the noble Lord excites the passions of the people. He says: 'There will be no wavering;' and the whole country, though they did not know why, were perfectly prepared to go to war with Russia again, and I believe that at that moment the right hon. Gentleman opposite (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) might have had an income tax of 20 per cent. . . . Understand, that

duplicity brought against the Russian Minister,* and he wound up by drawing an effective picture of the distress which this aggressive policy caused to the people.† This speech soon met with its reward. The policy of Lord Palmerston in China excited a large amount of disapproval in the House of Commons; and Mr. Cobden, on the part of the peace party, moved a vote of want of confidence. Cobden was supported by Lord John Russell and Mr. Gladstone, and his motion led to a combination of parties against the Government,—Lord John Russell, Mr. Gladstone, the advocates of peace, and the entire body of the Conservatives voting all together. In the course of the debates which took place, the lawfulness of forming such a combination against the Government was one of the subjects most warmly debated; and Mr. Disraeli, who, when his Government was about to fall in 1852, had made so violent an attack

from the first Russia never was in a position to strike a blow."—*Hansard*, 3 S. cxliv. 118-19.

* "Sir, I am told that the Russian Minister behaved very ill. Oh, wicked Baron Brunnow! The Russian Minister was actually so flagitious as to look after the interests of his master. Oh, ungrateful Baron Brunnow, who, after all the civility and hospitality he received in London, did not when in Paris do for Lord Clarendon that which Lord Clarendon ought to have done for himself!"—*Ibid.* 116.

† "In this state of affairs . . . this innocent, suffering, energetic, industrial, commercial, overtaxed people of England are resigned to their position, and are even enthusiastic in favour of the noble Lord, because they think that the burdens they bear are the natural consequences of the enormous dangers surrounding them, and that the noble Lord is the only man who can extricate them from difficulties which necessarily result from the condition of Europe."—*Ibid.* 123-4.

upon coalitions,* now, in reply to Lord Palmerston, entered into quite as vigorous a defence of that weapon of party warfare.†

The Government were defeated, and Lord Palmerston appealed to the country.‡

The address which Mr. Disraeli issued to his constituents upon this occasion is a very remarkable document, and definitely marks out the line of action which he adopted through the long period he was in opposition to Lord Palmerston. The policy of Lord Palmerston is generally understood. It was a policy of active interference in the affairs of other countries, and of a strong, not to say aggressive, defence of English rights throughout the world. In other words, it was a policy which corresponds very closely to what is now designated as a "spirited foreign policy." To this system Mr. Disraeli, during all these years from 1857 down to 1865, offered the diametrically opposite

* See *ante*, 472-3.

† "The First Minister is of all men," said he, "the man who cannot bear a coalition. Why, Sir, he is the archetype of political combinations without avowed political principles. . . . The noble Lord cannot bear coalitions! The noble Lord has acted only with those amongst whom he was born and bred in politics! That infant Hercules was taken out of a Whig cradle! And how consistent has been his political life! Looking back upon the past half-century during which he has professed almost every principle, and connected himself with almost every party, the noble Lord has raised a warning voice to-night against coalitions, because he fears that a majority of the House of Commons, ranking in its numbers some of the most eminent members of the House, . . . may not approve a policy with respect to China which has began in outrage, and which, if pursued will end in ruin."—*Hansard*, 3 S. cxliv. 1839.

‡ Irving, 329.

one of non-intervention, a policy of conciliation abroad, and of peace, retrenchment, and the improvement of the social condition of the people at home. The address of 1857 puts these principles of Lord Beaconsfield in a very brief but in a very intelligible form. Lord Palmerston he described in this address as occupying a false position. "He is," he said, "a Tory chief of a Radical Cabinet." And then he went on to describe as a result of this position that he was "obliged to divert the attention of the people from the consideration of their domestic affairs to the distraction of foreign politics. His external system is turbulent and aggressive, that his rule at home may be tranquil and unassailed." And the consequence of this was "excessive expenditure and the stoppage of all social improvement." "His scheme of conduct" was "so devoid of all political principle that, when forced to appeal to the country, his only claim to their confidence" was "his name." "Such arts and resources" are described as more suitable to "the despotic ruler of a continental state than to "a British Minister governing a country proud, free, and progressive." Then Mr. Disraeli recommended as a counter policy to all this, "Peace, Reduced Taxation, and Social Improvement."*

* The following are the principal passages of this remarkable address in full: "Lord Palmerston is an eminent man, who has deserved well of his country; but, as a Prime Minister, he occupies a false position. He is a Tory chief of a Radical Cabinet. With no domestic policy, he is obliged to divert the attention of the People, from the consideration of their own affairs, to the distraction of Foreign

In the course of his election Lord Beaconsfield enlarged upon the principles contained in his address. He described the war with Persia as the result of ill-advised counsels, and pointed out how his ministry, though having to deal with precisely the same difficulty in Persia, succeeded by a policy of conciliation and sense in avoiding the horrors of war.* He ex-

Politics. His external system is turbulent and aggressive, that his rule at home may be tranquil and unassailed. Hence arises Excessive Expenditure, Heavy Taxation, and the Stoppage of all Social Improvement. His scheme of conduct is so devoid of all Political Principle that, when forced to Appeal to the People, his only claim to their confidence is his name. Such arts and resources may suit the despotic ruler of a continental State excited by revolutions, but they do not become a British Minister governing a country, proud, free, and progressive, animated by glorious traditions and aspiring to future excellence. . . . The general policy which I would enforce at this juncture may be contained in these words—Honourable Peace, Reduced Taxation, and Social Improvement."—*Bucks Herald*, March 21, 1857.

* "We have had a great deal of excitement with respect to the war with Persia. It is a subject of great controversy whether the Government of this country ought to have engaged in that war without assembling and appealing to Parliament, and whether the course pursued by the present Administration has been a just one; but I will not now enter into that question. It is generally thought that if the city of Herat is in the possession of Persia our Indian Empire is in danger. . . . Recently, that city having been captured by Persia, a war was proclaimed, or rather undertaken, against Persia, without the knowledge of Parliament. Very considerable expenses have been incurred, and though we are told that peace has been effected, it will always be a question whether the course pursued in respect of Persia has been just and politic. Let me remind you that when the Government of Lord Derby was in office the very same circumstance occurred with respect to Persia as at the present day. The Shah of Persia not only menaced, but besieged, attacked, and captured the city of Herat. According to the political doctrines of this day our Indian Empire was in danger. What was the course we took? Did we invade Persia and make war without the cognizance of Parliament? (Hear.) Did we involve this country in immense expenditure? Very

pressed his doubt as to whether Lord Palmerston, in declaring war against Persia without the previous consent of Parliament, was acting constitutionally; and the result of this warlike policy he described as a country burdened by war taxes in time of peace.* "I am told," he said, amid the laughter

different was the course we pursued. We had an efficient representative at the Court of Teheran—Colonel Shiel. . . . We sent to him the most energetic but conciliatory instructions. We told him to go to the Shah of Persia and impress upon him that if he persisted in the course he was pursuing we would adopt measures of earnest stringency. We required him to give up Herat, and to return to his own dominions, or we would invade his country, and take measures which would render a repetition of his offence impossible. What did the Shah do? He retired from Herat, and conceded all we required, without our incurring those great expenses which have now been incurred in respect to the Persian expedition, and without our entering into a course which I doubt that the spirit of the Constitution would justify. We succeeded in effecting all the present Government had done without turmoil and expense."—*Bucks Herald*, April 4, 1857.

* "You must all be painfully conscious that the burthens upon your industry and your property have been greatly augmented of late years, and it appears to me that, peace having been concluded, the duty of the House of Commons was calmly to survey the financial condition of the country, and to consider by what prudent and proper means we could alleviate the burthens of the people and obtain what are the great blessings of peace—lighter taxation and a freer course for capital and industry. (Cheers.) Well, gentlemen, it was with that object that I have expressed, and that my friends have expressed, our opinion that considerable reduction should be effected in the public expenditure. . . . You have also in time of peace war taxes upon your tea and upon your sugar, and therefore we have not yet returned to the position in which we had a right to expect that we should find ourselves after the lapse of more than a year since peace was concluded. In looking to the means by which a reduction of taxation may be effected—by which we may carry out the adopted policy of Parliament by getting rid of the war taxes on tea and sugar, and ultimately, in 1860, altogether abolishing the income tax, we have to consider the expenditure of the country, not only upon the

of his audience, "that this is a very spirited policy, that there is nothing like making the influence of England felt, and that there is nothing of which an Englishman should be more proud than to feel that he is like a Roman citizen in every part of the world."* But he went on to show that the spirited foreign policy consisted of bullying weak countries like Greece, Persia, and China, and in accepting "in silence" "insults" from powerful nations like Russia, Austria, and France.†

military and naval, but upon the civil establishments, and we have also to consider the general policy of the country as it affects expenditure. It is a fact that the public expenditure has increased to an enormous amount during the last few years."—*Ibid.*

* *Ibid.*

† It is a policy which I am told is very popular; it is a policy of perpetual meddling in every part of the world (hear, hear), occasioning disturbances which cause expense, and consequently lead to increased estimates. I am told that this is a very spirited policy (laughter), that there is nothing like making the influence of England felt, and that there is nothing of which an Englishman should be more proud than to feel that he is like a Roman citizen in every part of the world (laughter and cheers). . . . I find that Greece and Persia and China are perpetually the means by which the glory of British arms is to be established and illustrated (hear, and a laugh), but that we receive insults from Russia and Austria, and that two or three years ago we even received insults from France, which are passed over in silence, but which, if these states had been weak, would have been resented by the presence of admirals and generals. The practical effect of this policy is to add to your expenditure £2,000,000 or £3,000,000 a year, and you must remember, when you consider whether the income tax shall be reduced to 7*d.* or 5*d.*, that the difference of £2,000,000 between the sums raised by those rates of duty is probably the amount of expenditure occasioned by the expeditions and interferences resulting from your present policy. . . . How, then, can you look forward to getting rid of the income tax, unless you exercise strict control over the conduct of the Government with respect to interference in foreign countries? (Hear, hear)."—*Ibid.*

The result of the General Election was a very considerable majority in favour of Lord Palmerston and his policy.

We must leave for the present the discussion of this interesting phase in the opinions of Lord Beaconsfield in foreign policy. We now wish to test him on the question which we have already discussed in dealing with the Crimean war—on the attitude, namely, that ought to be observed by an Opposition when the Minister is dealing with a great external difficulty.

In the course of this session of 1857, Lord Palmerston stood face to face with one of the most portentous crises an English Minister had ever yet encountered. In the beginning of June the first reports began to reach England of the Indian Mutiny, and as the days went by the news became more terrible. There were accounts of massacres, of perilous sieges, and of other events that for the time being threatened to annihilate our rule in India, and at the same time to carry along with it the massacre of every English man, woman, and child there. Here, then, was an occasion when the Opposition was bound to behave with reticence and reserve. This, however, was not the course pursued; and the very first person whom the Opposition attacked was Lord Canning, the Indian Viceroy, who was then endeavouring to crush this fearful revolt against our rule.

On the 29th of June Mr. Disraeli made an attack on both Lord Canning and Lord Palmerston's Administration in the shape of a string of interrogatories.

He described the Russian war, the war with China, and that with Persia, as all entered upon by Lord Palmerston for the purpose of keeping up English prestige in India, and then he asked how far this purpose could be said to have been served in presence of the terrible events at that moment going on there.* He declared that our whole position in that dependency was imperilled; suggested even that we might lose India;† and asked the extraordinary question if Lord Canning had resigned. Mr. Vernon Smith, then President of the Board of Control, made a very sharp reply to those strictures. Taking up the query with regard to the resignation of Lord Canning, Mr. Smith expressed his amazement that the Governor-General should be thought to contemplate resignation in the midst of such an extraordinary crisis; and he declared that Lord Canning had behaved with vigour and with judgment.‡

On the 27th of July Mr. Disraeli again returned to the subject, and delivered a three-hours' oration on the whole Indian question. He condemned very strongly the annexations which had recently taken place,§ especially the annexation of Oude,‖ and wound up by the proposal that a Royal Commission should be sent from the Queen to India to inquire into the grievances of all classes. Mr. Vernon Smith pertinently asked what was the use of this three-hours' oration, and whether there was not very great

* Annual Register, xcix. 132.
† *Ibid.*
‡ *Ibid.* 132-3.
§ *Ibid.* 138.
‖ *Ibid.* 139.

mischief in bringing forward this subject as Mr. Disraeli had done;* and pointed out the pretty obvious fact that the issue of a Commission in the middle of a revolt would have the effect of superseding the Governor-General; and so would seriously weaken his authority at the very moment when it required the greatest support. A short debate followed. Sir E. Perry and Mr. Whiteside supported the views of Mr. Disraeli and his conduct in bringing forward the question at that moment,† while Mr. Campbell said that he had never heard a more unpatriotic and injudicious speech.‡ There was another and more significant proof of the manner in which Mr. Disraeli's intervention was regarded. Lord John Russell, though he was no longer a member of Lord Palmerston's Ministry, thought it was so necessary to do away with the effect of such apparent want of thorough confidence in the Government, that he proposed an address which amounted to an assurance of complete faith in the Administration.§ The feeling of the House was so strongly in favour of this course that Mr. Disraeli had to withdraw his motion, and the resolution of Lord John Russell was carried even without a division.‖

In the December of this year Parliament was unexpectedly called together, the Government having been compelled by a commercial crisis to violate the law with regard to the Bank charter. In the debate

* *Ibid.* 139.
† *Ibid.* 140-41.
‡ *Ibid.* 141.
§ *Ibid.*
‖ *Ibid.* 142.

on the Address, Mr. Disraeli again returned to the charge of aggression against the policy of Lord Palmerston. He was surprised, in face of the line of action adopted by the Premier, that we were still at peace.* The act of Lord Palmerston, with which Mr. Disraeli found most fault, was a speech delivered at the Guildhall. This speech he condemned as an "appeal" to "all the belligerent passions of the country," and as calculated to excite the dread that we were on the eve of a resort to arms.†

* "It must be a source of the greatest satisfaction, if my interpretation of one paragraph in the speech from the Throne be correct—I mean that which declares that our relations with our neighbours are of an amicable character. . . . The paragraph is as follows: 'The nations of Europe are in the enjoyment of the blessings of peace, which nothing seems likely to disturb.' Now, several of my hon. Friends have put upon this passage an interpretation that may be correct, but which I, taking a more hopeful view, can scarcely suppose to be accurate. They seem to think that something like an expression of regret is conveyed in that paragraph—as if the noble Lord (Viscount Palmerston) had said, 'I have done all I could to get up a difficulty with the European Powers, but I am sorry to say, I have not succeeded. We are still at peace; and I am able to bring before you nothing, really nothing, that promises to disturb the universal tranquillity;' as though in that bold language which renders the noble Lord at all times popular, he said, 'I have done my best, but for this once the turbulent and aggressive policy has failed. I cannot help it, but we are in for it; we are at present all at peace.' (Loud laughter.)"—*Hansard*, 3 S. cxlviii. 115.

† "Judging from the speech which the noble Lord is reported to have made on that occasion, I own I shared the prevailing alarm that we were about to be involved again in those difficulties in which we have generally found ourselves under him, and from which he is so proud to extricate us. An appeal was then made by the noble Lord to all the belligerent passions of the country with that eloquence and emphasis which the noble Lord always employs. Since that memorable speech of old Harry Dundas, delivered during the revolutionary war, when he declared that one Englishman could beat

In this same speech he also reverted to the Indian question, once more putting forth the annexation of Oude as one of the chief causes of the mutiny; and called upon the Government to make a frank avowal of their intentions with regard to their future administration of our eastern empire.* These are the only points worth notice in his action in the preliminary session.

When Parliament reassembled on February 4, 1858, one of the first tasks of the Ministry was to propose a vote of thanks to the Indian officials who had been engaged in bringing the mutiny to a successful termination; and in spite of the protests of his intimate friends, Messrs. Walpole,† Henley, and Drummond.‡ Mr. Disraeli opposed the vote so far as Lord Canning was concerned.

In the course of this session Lord Palmerston brought in the East Indian Bill, the object of which was to do away with the double control of the East India Company and the Government, and fuse the two authorities into the single one of the Crown. To this bill Mr. Disraeli offered strenuous opposition—one of his arguments being that the distinction between the English and Indian exchequers could not be kept up. "The expenditure would," he said,

three Frenchmen, and which was recorded afterwards as a statistical fact, I hardly know any speech which has produced so great an effect, and which was more calculated to animate the heart of a country on the eve of being tried by exigencies of the most perilous character."—*Ibid.* 116.

* Annual Register, xcix. 205. † *Ibid.* c. 13. ‡ *Ibid.* 14.

"be increased every year, and the question would be not of losing India, but of ruining England." *

Shortly after this a circumstance arose which once more entirely changed Mr. Disraeli's position, and, as a consequence, produced a change in his views. The fearful attempt which had been made by Orsini on the life of the Emperor Napoleon had produced a considerable tension between this country and France, the chief reason being that some persons implicated in the conspiracy were resident in this country, but could not by the existing law be handed over to the French authorities. Lord Palmerston, anxious to keep up a good understanding between the two countries, and at the same time to help in putting down the crime of political assassination, brought in his famous Bill to amend the Conspiracy Law. This bill was supported at first, amongst others, by Mr. Disraeli.† After a while, however, the bill became extremely unpopular, raised a storm of indignation throughout the country, and produced a combination of parties against the Ministry. Mr. Disraeli, thereupon, swallowed his former expressions of approval, joined the enemies of the Ministry,‡ and so, by the much-abused weapon of coalition, once more succeeded in defeating Lord Palmerston, and in obtaining his place.

The new Derby-Disraeli administration was like the first Ministry under the same auspices in this, that it was impossible to get anything from the Govern-

* *Ibid.* 29. † *Ibid.* 41-2. ‡ *Ibid.* 49-50.

ment like a clear exposition of their policy. They were notoriously a Government in a minority; and Mr. Disraeli acted as he has always done when in that position, by purchasing the right to hold office at the cost of proposing as little as possible himself, and accepting everything proposed by anybody else. One of his first acts was to take up the East India question, and to propose a bill which, in the main point of fusing the authority of the East India Company and the Crown, was identical with the measure of Lord Palmerston he had shortly before opposed. However, this new bill contained some novel propositions, the credit of which entirely belonged to the existing Ministry. It was proposed that there should be a council of eighteen members, half of whom were to be elective. Four of these elective members were to be chosen by ex-Indian officials resident in England, and the remainder were to be elected by the parliamentary constituency in five of the large cities of the United Kingdom—London, Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow, and Belfast.* This extraordinary proposal was received with universal disapproval. It was evident that if it were persisted in, it would prove fatal to the bill, and it was generally considered that Mr. Disraeli would elude the difficulty by his characteristic plan of making a complete surrender. On Parliament reassembling after the Easter recess on April 12, he, however, gave no signs whatever of the course which he was about to pursue, but contented himself with saying that the

* *Ibid.* 69-70.

second reading of the East Indian Bill would be proposed as soon as possible after the introduction of the Budget.* Hereupon Lord John Russell came to Mr. Disraeli's rescue, and pointing out the enormous difficulties which attended the settlement of this East Indian question, and the necessity there was that it should be done with once for all, suggested that the House should proceed by resolutions.

Mr. Disraeli jumped at the offer with "an eagerness," writes the Annual Register, "which occasioned some amusement to the House;"† and indeed the statement of Mr. Disraeli in reply to the proposition might well cause a very considerable amount of amusement. His modest proposition was that Lord John Russell should take the management of the question entirely out of the hands of the Ministry, and having conducted it to a successful issue in the shape of resolutions, leave to them the easy task of putting those resolutions into the shape of a bill. In other words, the chief representative of the Ministry proposed that a leader of the Opposition should take upon himself the duty of bringing in, and carrying through, the chief ministerial measure of the session! Mr. Disraeli was obliging enough, however, to add that if Lord John Russell did not accept this magnanimous offer, the Government themselves would undertake to perform their duty. "He would not shrink," said Mr. Disraeli, "from" the responsibility

* *Ibid.* 73.
† *Ibid.* 74.

of "proposing resolutions," in case Lord John Russell did not consent to do so.*

Of course this ridiculous proposition to relegate to a private member the chief duty of the Ministry, was rejected, and the Government ultimately brought in a bill, which was known as the East India Bill No. 3, to distinguish it from the measure of Lord Palmerston, and that of Mr. Disraeli himself, which had ended in failure. As to the discussions on this important measure, I think it necessary to take notice of only one, and that arose on a proposal of Mr. Gladstone to add a clause declaring "That except for repelling actual invasion, or under other sudden and urgent necessity, Her Majesty's forces in the East Indies shall not be employed in any military operation beyond the external frontier of Her Majesty's Indian possessions, without the consent of Parliament

* Annual Register, c. 74. The whole of the exquisite passage in which Mr. Disraeli made these notable proposals is worth quoting. "The course suggested by the noble Lord," he said, "would be much more convenient than that proposed by the Administration. If it were agreeable to the House, he would not shrink from proposing resolutions. At the same time he intimated that, considering the noble Lord's great experience and ability, the undertaking could not be in better hands than Lord John Russell's." As the noble Lord recommended this mode of proceeding, and as he possesses in this House an authority which no one more deservedly exercises, I must say it would be more agreeable to me if he would propose the resolutions—(a laugh)—but, as I before said, I shall not shrink from the responsibility of doing so. (Laughter and cheers.) But there should be no unnecessary delay. The resolutions should be placed before the House as soon as convenient to the noble Lord; "we shall be ready to give up this day week, or Friday fortnight." With ample discussion devoid of party feeling the country will be satisfied that the best plan has been adopted."

to the purposes thereof." This amendment the Government promptly accepted with a slight alteration, and Mr. Disraeli was among those who gave to Mr. Gladstone's proposition the most earnest and effective support.*

It must be added that the clause was afterwards modified in the House of Lords, in a way that considerably limits its application, and that both Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli accompanied their adhesion to the clause by insisting on those modifications.†

In the course of the session an extraordinary episode took place which for a time threatened to wreck the Government. Lord Canning sent to England the draft of a proclamation which proposed to make extensive alterations in the tenure of land in Oude. Without

* After pointing out that though the constitution gave power of peace or war to the Sovereign, this prerogative was bestowed in reference to England, and not to India, he went on to remark that in England the House of Commons, which had to vote the supplies for carrying on the war, had by that means a legitimate and constitutional mode of expressing its opinion. "But," proceeded Mr. Disraeli, "if the power of declaring war and peace was left entirely in the hands of the Sovereign in India, there were not the means of controlling its exercise that existed in this country, and a policy might be pursued entirely injurious to the national interests."—Hansard, 3 S. cli. 1014. And in another place he declared that the proposed alteration "did not involve any invasion of the prerogative that the Crown exercised under the constitution of the country, but was a salutary and politic provision."—*Hansard*, cl. 1015.

† The clause as amended by Lord Derby ran—"Except for preventing or repelling actual invasion of Her Majesty's Indian possessions, or under other sudden and urgent necessity, the revenues of India shall not, without the consent of Parliament, be applicable to defray the expenses of any military operation carried on beyond the external frontiers of such possessions by Her Majesty's forces charged upon such revenues."—*Ibid.* cli. 1696.

waiting for the document itself, or for the letters of explanation which might accompany it, Lord Ellenborough, who was then President of the Board of Control, wrote a very strongly worded despatch of condemnation. A copy of this despatch he sent to Lord Granville, as a friend of Lord Canning, and to Mr. Bright as leader of the party which advocated conciliatory treatment of the natives of India. He did not intend that the despatch should be made public, but it came by an accident before Parliament. A storm was raised, several motions of censure were entered on the books, and for some time it appeared more than likely that the Government would be wrecked upon this question. Lord Ellenborough partly averted the blow by resigning. After this, the debates on the various motions dragged for a considerable time along, and before they could reach their conclusion, news had come from India that Sir James Outram had made similar objections to the Canning proclamation as Lord Ellenborough. The consequence was that, one after the other, the motions implying censure on the Government were withdrawn; and the event, which at one time threatened to bring the Government to premature extinction, ended by considerably strengthening their position and weakening that of their opponents. Mr. Disraeli was so delighted with this result, that, in addressing a meeting of his constituents at Slough,*

* This is the passage of the Slough speech which attracted most attention: "There is nothing like that last Friday evening in the history of the House of Commons. We came down to the house expecting to divide at four o'clock in the morning; I myself probably

ne indulged in some attacks upon his opponents which called upon him several severe rejoinders.

Of Mr. Disraeli's conduct during the rest of this session it is unnecessary to say anything further than that he was again placed in some difficulty by the introduction of a Bill for the Admission of Jews to Parliament, which was opposed by Lord Derby * and by Sir Frederick Thesiger, who had then just been appointed Lord Chancellor under the title of Lord Chelmsford.† The amusing part of the discussion was that Mr. Newdegate, in denouncing the measure, referred to the writings of the elder and younger Disraeli for his arguments against the proposal. He quoted the elder Disraeli to prove the want of moral obligations in the Jews; and "Coningsby" was his authority for the damning objection against their admission to Parliament, that the first Jesuits were all Jews.‡ Mr. Disraeli

expecting to deliver an address two hours after midnight; and I believe that, even with the consciousness of a good cause, that is no mean effort. Well, gentlemen, we were all assembled; our benches with their serried ranks seemed to rival those of our proud opponents; when suddenly there arose a wail of distress, but not from us. I can only liken the scene to the mutiny of the Bengal army. Regiment after regiment, corps after corps, general after general, all acknowledged that they could not march through Coventry. It was like a convulsion of nature rather than an ordinary transaction of human life. I can only liken it to one of those earthquakes which take place in Calabria and Peru. There was a rumbling murmur, a groan, a shriek, a sound of distant thunder. No one knew whether it came from the top or the bottom of the house. There was a rent, a fissure in the ground, and then a village disappeared, then a tall tower toppled down, and the whole of the Opposition benches became one great dissolving view of anarchy."—*Molesworth*, vol. iii. 125.

* Annual Register, c. 154.

† 154-5. ‡ *Ibid.* 152.

must have been rather startled to see to what purposes the eulogies of his race which he put into the mouth of Sidonia, could be turned by a member of the party of which he was the leader. Finally, on this session let me say that it is to Mr. Disraeli that we owe the measures by which the river Thames is purified as it passes through London.

When the Ministry met Parliament in 1859, the chief points of interest were, first, the threatened war between France and Austria in reference to the affairs of Italy; and, secondly, the Reform Bill which the Conservative Ministry announced their intention of producing.

With regard to the foreign question, the Conservative party generally, and its chiefs, gave it pretty clearly to be understood that they were strongly in favour of the *status quo* in Lombardy and Venice, and that they had no sympathy whatever with the efforts of Victor Emmanuel, King of Sardinia, to change the existing state of things in the Peninsula. Of the Reform Bill which Mr. Disraeli introduced in the House of Commons, it is not necessary to say much more of it than that its provisions made no considerable addition to the electorate generally, but added a number of what came afterwards to be called "fancy franchises." The only attempt it made at lowering the qualification was that the county qualification was reduced to the same level as that in the towns—namely, to £10. This, Mr. Disraeli calculated, would add 200,000 to the county electorate. While making this

addition on the one hand, Mr. Disraeli with the other made almost as large a reduction in the number of electors, by proposing that the freeholders of the town should be prevented from having a vote in the county, the result of which would be to disfranchise 90,000 or 100,000 of the electors.* The first effect of the introduction of this measure was to produce the resignation of Mr. Walpole and Mr. Henley; Mr. Walpole bluntly declaring that such a Bill, if introduced by Lord Palmerston or Lord John Russell, would have been opposed in a body by the Conservative party.†

Such a Bill for reforming the representation of the people was, of course, a mere pretence, and so was met with the united opposition of the Liberal party. The clause which had the effect of disfranchising the freeholders in the towns proved especially obnoxious, and Lord John Russell promptly gave notice of an amendment on the second reading, which would have the effect of rejecting the Bill because of that clause. Mr. Disraeli, after his manner, endeavoured to meet the storm by yielding to it. He proposed a change in the freehold clause, the effect of which would be to give the freeholder the right of choosing, if he pleased, to vote for the county, but at the same time preventing him, if he chose for the county, from voting also in the town. This concession, however, did not satisfy the Liberal party; on a division the Bill was defeated

* Annual Register, ci. 52—55.

† *Ibid.* 58.

by a majority of 39, and the Ministry thereupon appealed to the country.*

Mr. Disraeli's address to his constituents was particularly skilful. He represented that the Liberal party was hopelessly split into hostile sections, that the critical state of affairs on the Continent required the Queen to have a strong Government, and that the Conservative party alone offered materials for forming such a Government.†

The result of the elections was that 302 Conservatives and 350 Liberals were returned; and immediately after Parliament assembled, the Liberal party, through Lord Hartington, proposed a vote of no confidence. The vote was carried by a large majority, and the Ministry resigned.‡

* In the course of his speech, introducing his Reform Bill, Mr. Disraeli used these words: "Well, then, if the House of Commons loses its hold over the Executive of the country, what happens? We fall back on a bureaucratic system, and we should find ourselves, after all our struggles, in the very same position which, in 1640, we had to extricate ourselves from. Your administration would be carried on by a Court Minister, perhaps a Court minion." —*Hansard*, 3 S. clii. 981.

† Molesworth, iii. 138.

‡ In the course of the debate upon this motion there was a severe rencontre between Mr. Disraeli and Sir James Graham. The latter had, during the elections, used some very strong language about the tactics of the Government for obtaining votes. Mr. Disraeli in replying to these suggestions said: "When I saw in the newspapers the name 'City of Carlisle,' I naturally looked at what was taking place in that quarter. But reading, I fear a little incorrectly, I confess I did mistake, at the time, the speech which appears to have been made by a distinguished Member of this House for that of the young gentleman that he was introducing to his constituents. When I read that charge upon the Ministry which we were told was to be the basis of a Parliamentary vote of want of confidence, when I read statements

The record of Mr. Disraeli's parliamentary career during 1860 to 1865 is comparatively uneventful. During those years Lord Palmerston had attained such an overwhelming popularity in the country, and that popularity was due so much to his personal characteristics as distinct from party connections, that it was quite vain to make any attempt to dislodge him from power. In that period the House of Commons presented the curious spectacle of a Premier who frequently found on the opposite side support against the more extreme and discontented elements of his own party; in fact, it was a period when anything

made without the slightest foundation and with a bitterness which seemed to me to be perfectly gratuitous, I could not help saying 'Young men will be young men.' Youth is, as we all know, somewhat reckless in assertion, and when we are juvenile and curly one takes pride in sarcasm and invective. . . . I felt—and I am sure my colleagues shared the same sentiments—that when that young gentleman entered this House, he might, when gazing upon the venerable form, and listening to the accents of benignant wisdom that fell from the lips of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Carlisle, he might learn how reckless assertion in time may mature into accuracy of statement, and how bitterness and invective, however organic, can be controlled by the vicissitudes of a wise experience. . . . The Earl of Derby has treated that assertion, quoted by the right hon. Gentleman, with silent contempt. All the other assertions made at the time have been answered in detail, and therefore I suppose he thought the time might come when, the subject being fairly before the House, he could leave it to me to say for him, what I do say now, that that statement was an impudent fabrication."—*Hansard*, 3 S. cliv. 127. Sir James Graham's reply was equally unsparing. He complained first of the phrase "impudent fabrication." But Mr. Disraeli explained that he had not applied the words to Sir J. Graham himself, but to the authority on whom he had founded his statements. The Speaker having been called upon, declared that he also had so understood Mr. Disraeli's phrase. Sir James Graham then proceeded: "Certainly, Sir, what the right hon. Gentleman has said, confirmed by your high and unimpeachable

like acrimonious party conflict or bitterness was suspended.

During those years, Mr. Disraeli was fighting a hopeless battle: but he still kept on preaching that policy of peace, non-intervention, and economy, of which I have recently spoken. He preached, however, to a world that did not listen: and his teaching, in place of lowering, seemed but to increase the *prestige* and power of his rival. Those years of vain effort were not, it will be seen, lost upon him. He did not perceive in vain that the apostle of peace abroad and domestic improvement

authority, is some satisfaction to my wounded feelings. (A laugh, and cheers.) But the right hon. Gentleman went on to remark upon the mild influences of age, presenting in his own person a contradiction to the Horatian maxim, '*Senit albescens animos capillus;*' because he was an illustration of the fact that one might lose one's curls and still retain one's taste for sarcasm. (Laughter and cheers.) I must say, Sir, on this occasion, that I had the honour of a seat in the House when the right hon. Gentleman first took his place in it. I early, indeed immediately, recognized his great abilities, and, without envy, without the slightest grudging, I have watched his rise to his present pre-eminence. But intemperate language in a position such as the right hon. Gentleman occupies is always a proof to me of a falling cause—(cheers)—and I regard that speech, and those expressions, as a happy omen of the coming success of this motion. (Renewed cheers.) The right hon. Gentleman will pardon me if I express to him an opinion. I regard him as the Red Indian of debate. (Laughter.) By the use of the tomahawk he has cut his way to power, and by a recurrence to the scalping system he hopes to prevent the loss of it. (Cheers and laughter.) When the right hon. Gentleman uses towards one who offered him no offence—(oh! oh!)—language of the tone and character which he has applied to me, I say this, that I was astonished by the rudeness of the assault—(oh! oh! and cheers)—but I really forgive it on account of the feeling of anger and of disappointment at blighted hopes by which it was dictated. (Oh! oh! and cheers.)"—*Irving's Annals of our Time*, 391.

at home was impotent against one who practised the opposite creed of vigorous assertion of English *prestige* and active English intervention; he saw, learned, and digested the lesson that the popular Minister in England—for a time, at least—is he who appeals to belligerent emotions, national vanity, and hereditary prejudices against one foreign Power in particular.

We are now, however, dealing with the period when, as yet, he either had not discovered this truth, or found it impossible, from his position, to make use of it. Accordingly, in the debate on the Address, we find him singing the glories of non-intervention in tones that delighted the souls of men like Mr. Bright and Mr. Cobden, and that on one occasion extorted from the latter the declaration that the vote he gave against the Ministry of Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli was the one which he most regretted of all he had ever given.*

* Mr. Disraeli said—"There is no doubt, however, that the House was opposed to our going into the Congress, and that it was in favour of that policy which is popularly known by the name of the policy of non-interference. I say popularly known by that name, because I do not know any member of this House—either among my colleagues or among those who sit on the other side of the House—who has ever maintained the monstrous proposition that England ought never, under any circumstances, to interfere in the affairs of foreign states. There are conditions under which it may be our imperative duty to interfere. We may clearly interfere in the affairs of foreign countries when the interests or the honour of England are at stake, or when, in our opinion, the independence of Europe is menaced. But a great responsibility devolves upon that Minister who has to decide when those conditions have arisen; and he who makes a mistake upon that subject, he who involves his

Another topic on which Mr. Disraeli most strongly insisted in those years was the right of the House of Commons to be treated with the utmost frankness by the Ministry. As has been seen in one of the

country in interference or in war under the idea that the interests or honour of the country are concerned, when neither is substantially involved—he who involves his country in interference or war because he believes the independence of Europe is menaced, when, in fact, the independence of Europe is not in danger—makes, of course, a great—a fatal mistake. The general principle that we ought not to interfere in the affairs of foreign nations unless there is a clear necessity, and that, generally speaking, it ought to be held a political dogma that the people of other countries should settle their own affairs without the introduction of foreign influence or foreign power, is one which, I think the House does not only accept, but I trust, will carefully adhere to. That was the policy which the late Government maintained six months ago, when there was some wavering in the faith of that policy, and some person high in authority spoke of the possibility of England being humiliated by not taking what is called a leading part in the settlement of foreign questions. I ask those who then wavered or who indulged in such observations to contrast the position of England now, when after six months we still have to acknowledge the blessings of non-interference in the affairs of our neighbours, notwithstanding the efforts which have been made to interfere, and to which I shall presently refer—I ask them to contrast the position of England with that of any other country in the world. Has not the adhesion to the policy of non-interference by England been most beneficial? Has there ever been a period when England has occupied a prouder or more powerful position than that which she at present fills? As, therefore, she has attained that position while adhering to the policy of non-interference, I trust that the House of Commons, which, on the last night of the Session, clearly expressed its opinion in favour of that policy, will at the commencement of the present Session, take this opportunity of asking explanations of Her Majesty's Government, or, in other words, will show to Her Majesty's Government that if they continue in that policy they will receive the support of the House; but that if they diverge from it they must offer to the House reasons far graver than any that have yet reached my ear, and arguments of more weighty import than I believe will be introduced into this debate."—*Hansard*, clvi. 95-6.

years already dealt with, he was vigilantly on the watch to see if the Government had made any arrangements or treaties without the knowledge of Parliament: and if he discovered, or fancied he discovered, the existence of such things, he immediately proclaimed it from the housetops, and was inarticulate with rage at the invasion of the rights of Parliament which such conduct involved. In the speech on the Address to which I am now alluding, he sharply questioned the Ministry as to whether they had during the recess sought to enter into an agreement with the French Government for the settlement of the affairs of Italy. He pointed out how such an agreement would, to his mind, be in direct antagonism with the opinion which Parliament had expressed before its rising in favour of a policy of non-intervention; and he complained bitterly of the delay of the Premier in producing papers on these and other questions on which Parliament had a right to information.*

* "Now, I should like to know what was the intimation which Her Majesty's Government received, which induced them to consent to enter into a Congress. But what I want to know from Her Majesty's Government still more than this is, why, in the month of August, when Parliament was sitting—the very month that Parliament was prorogued, the very month that the House of Commons had expressed in debate, scarcely with any exception, its belief that the maintenance of a policy of non-interference in the affairs of Italy was necessary and politic—I want to know if, in that very month of August, the noble Lord, the Secretary of State, made overtures to the French Government in order to enter into a special agreement for the settlement of the affairs of Italy? We are, indeed, promised in the gracious Speech that papers on this subject will soon be laid before us. On that I would make two observations. I will say to the noble Lord the First Minister that there are no promises that he has

Next, he described the nature of this agreement to be an undertaking between France and England to prevent by force of arms any interference by a foreign power in the internal affairs of Italy; and he pointed out with vigour the enormous responsibilities which any such engagement would involve.*

made so frequently as promises for the production of papers to the House; and, of all Ministers, there is no one of them of whom it can be alleged, as of the noble Lord, that so great an interval was allowed to elapse between the promise of papers and their actual production. Papers are promised at the beginning of the Session, and they are produced at the end of it. Therefore when the noble Lord says that papers will be laid on the table of the House, let me remind 'the two noble lords'—to use the language of the seconder of the Address—that there has been a formal account of all the negotiations that have taken place between the Government of the Queen and the Government of the Emperor of the French already published. Is it to be our lot that we are not to receive information from the Ministers of our own Sovereign respecting our own affairs, but that we are to be indebted for the information to the condescending candour of a foreign potentate?"—*Ibid.* 97-8.

* "I beg the House to watch very narrowly this proceeding. This was nothing more nor less than a proposition of an alliance offensive and defensive between France and England to prevent interference by any Power in the affairs of Italy. I dare say, from the language of the Royal Speech, that this very sentence may refer to a renewed effort for the same object—an object at the first blush innocent, and some might think praiseworthy, because it is Her Majesty, the Speech says, who endeavours to obtain for the people of Italy freedom from foreign interference by force of arms in their internal concerns. But look at what might be the consequences to this country if that alliance had been entered into, and which, according to the statement which I am assured is authoritative and authentic, was mainly refused by the English Government in these words—The British Cabinet, while expressing their readiness to support the principle of non-interference, either at the Congress or in their communications with Foreign Powers, pointed out the impossibility of the Cabinet pledging itself without the consent of Parliament to a course of policy that might involve hostilities. Now Parliament has assembled and we have in the speech from the Throne this somewhat am-

In discussing the French Treaty, he had a still better opportunity of expatiating on the constitutional rights of Parliament. His contention was that, in the form in which the Treaty was presented to the House of Commons, certain points were offered for discussion which were really *faits accomplis;* and he contended that such action rendered discussion a mockery, and brought the Parliament into discredit. He likewise spoke with force and truth on the hesitation which a Minister ought to have in dealing with a question so delicate as the respective privileges of the Crown and of the House of Commons; and how carefully a Minister ought to avoid even the semblance of bringing them into collision.*

biguous sentence, and which would have been to me altogether obscure had we not cognisance of the preceding events to which I have referred. We have it stated here that Her Majesty's Government will endeavour to obtain for Italy freedom from foreign interference by force of arms in its internal concerns, and that freedom it would appear is to be secured by this joint note of France and England, which makes interference by other Powers a *casus belli.* Observe what might happen. When you enter into a treaty you are not to look merely to the obvious and the probable engagements which you may be called upon to perform; but you are bound to contemplate every possible liability which, by so doing, you may incur. That is a rule of prudence universally acknowledged and invariably pursued."—*Ibid.* 99-100.

* "Sir," said Mr. Disraeli, "the relations between the Crown and this House are of a very peculiar and delicate character; and it should be our first study not to let them generate into mere formality. And for the Crown to send down a Message to this House, announcing that She had concluded a Treaty with the Emperor of the French, and inviting our consideration to it, and calling on us to grant Her Majesty the means to carry it into effect, when Her Majesty must have been duly informed by Her Ministers that we had parted with all those privileges of Parliament which secured our constitutional control over treaties, would be a course which I think no

In this Session, the only other act of Mr. Disraeli calling for particular comment is that he opposed the £6 Franchise Bill introduced by the Government. He did not divide on the second reading, and he adopted, in dealing with this question, the plan I have pointed out as being characteristic of his action for many years past on the question; that is to say, he opposed the scheme of the Liberals, and at the same time left himself an opportunity of dealing with the question by-and-

Minister would be justified in advising his Sovereign to follow, and would be at the same time a mockery to the Crown, and I need not say, an insult to the Commons of the United Kingdom."—*Ibid.* 1364-5. To this point he recurred over and over again. "A great Minister," he said shortly afterwards, "whom I shall have to quote in some subsequent remarks, has touched, I think, with great eloquence and truth upon the true union which may be effected between the prerogatives of the Crown and the privileges of Parliament upon this important subject of treaties. He said, 'It is the happy circumstance of our Constitution that it gives to the Crown the sole prerogative of negotiating and concluding treaties, but it gives the judgment, the revision, and the execution of those treaties to the privileges of the people.' But I want to know how we can have judgment, how we can effect revision, and how we can exercise control over the execution of a treaty, if we have already parted with those privileges, the possession and the exercise of which form, as it were, the privity between the House and the prerogative of the Crown?" —*Ibid.* 1365-6. "Free Trade principles," he said further on, "may be, and no doubt are, very good things, but I may be permitted to say that constitutional principles are better; and allow me to remind the House that they are much older. Now, this Treaty of Commerce before us appears to be an instrument which has been devised to silence the voice of our Legislature. Do not let it turn out that, in carrying it into effect another Legislature is deprived of its privileges."—*Ibid.* 1374. And, answering some objection, the speech wound up with the vigorous declaration that "the time has not yet come when an English Minister can feel that he is in a false position because he defers to the privileges of the House of Commons, and acknowledges the authority of Parliament."—*Ibid.*

by, in case a favourable opportunity for doing so should arise. It is noteworthy, however, in connection with declarations afterwards made and enactments subsequently passed by Mr. Disraeli on this question of the franchise, that the principal ground of his hostility to the reduction to £6 was that it would largely increase the number of votes of the working classes. The result of this would be, he declared, to enable those classes to combine and overpower the other portions of the community. This statement appears the more remarkable when it is known that the entire urban electorate of England and Wales, according to the calculation of Lord John Russell, by whom the Bill was introduced, would only be increased from 440,000 to 634,000—that is, by 194,000 votes. Even supposing that the new electors would be exclusively from the working class, Mr. Disraeli's statement amounted to this, that the addition of less than 200,000 working men to the electorate would have the effect of giving them power to swamp all the other classes of voters.*

The Address from the Throne at the opening of the session of 1861 contained no allusion to the question of Reform, and the leader of the Opposition, in place of

* "The working classes of this country," said Mr. Disraeli, "had shown a remarkable talent for organization, and a power of discipline and combination inferior to none, and to these classes the Bill was about to give predominant power. He thought a measure which founded the constituency upon the principle of numbers, not fitness, and which added 200,000 electors, composing one homogeneous class, having the same interest, who would neutralize the voices of the present borough constituency, was not a wise and well-considered one."—*Annual Register*, cii. 101.

blaming the Liberal Administration for its neglect of one of the first and most important of Liberal measures, was highly delighted and warmly approved. He "thought the Government could not be censured for omitting the topic in the Royal Speech, and he was not displeased at the omission."

Turning to the foreign policy of Lord Palmerston, Mr. Disraeli uttered a protest against the Premier's system of "secret diplomacy";† renewed his condemnation of Lord Palmerston's "pursuing the phantom of an United Italy";‡ and with his characteristically audacious forgetfulness of passages in his own career, accused the Ministry of "fishing" for a policy from Parliament.§

By the beginning of 1862 the Government had to deal with the question of the Civil War in America. Mr. Disraeli was wise enough to advocate a policy of complete neutrality;‖ and to this policy, to his everlasting credit, notwithstanding the rabid fervour of a large number of his supporters in favour of the Southern States, he adhered, throughout the entire civil conflict. Considering the foreign policy of Lord Palmerston, he condemned it, as he had consistently done, for its activity, and recommended disarmament as the true course to be adopted for maintaining tranquillity; denouncing "bloated armaments" in time of peace¶ with a fervour that recalled the orations of

* *Ibid.* ciii. 10.
† *Ibid.* 10.
‡ *Ibid.* 11.
§ *Ibid.*
‖ Annual Register, civ. 9.
¶ *Ibid.* 80.

Mr. Bright.* His attitude, also, in a debate in reference

* The phrase "bloated armaments" was used in a debate on the Customs and Inland Revenue Bill, May 8. One of the questions which Mr. Disraeli most carefully considered in this speech was, whether England required a larger force for her defence; and this question he decided emphatically in the negative. He examined the three grounds which could be assigned for an increase of her armaments: (1) self-defence; (2) "to obtain a great object of material importance;" and (3) "to use a phrase which has been introduced into this debate, to maintain her due influence in the councils of Europe."—*Hansard*, 3 S. clxvi. 1408. As to the first ground, England was sufficiently prepared for self-defence already; as to the second—the desirability of acquiring additional territory—he dismissed it with scornful impatience. "Now," he said, "I am quite at a loss to fix upon any point of material importance which this country aspires to. It appears to me that England is in possession of everything which a free, proud, and rational country can desire, and I entirely dismiss any consideration under that head."—*Ibid.* He then went on to consider the third ground—the influence which England ought to maintain in the councils of Europe; and on that point he was equally emphatic in his condemnation of an increase of our forces. "What," he asked, "is this moral power to exercise which is now the policy of England? I will tell you what moral power means. It means garrisons doubled and trebled. It means squadrons turned into fleets; and in an age of mechanical invention to which there is no assignable limit, it means perpetual stimulus given to the study of the science of destruction."—*Ibid.* 1421-2. "The consequence," he proceeded, "of the policy of what is called moral power—that is to say, warlike armaments in time of peace—of a dictatorial policy never conceding, scorning conciliation, shrinking from compromise and never having forbearance—is that you find yourselves involved in war. Your armaments lead to rival armaments; and it is an inevitable necessity that any country which is obliged to incur a warlike expenditure in times of peace for any considerable period, ultimately takes refuge from the intolerable position in which it must find itself, in an attempt to realise some result by a state of war."—*Ibid.* 1422. He next proceeded to argue against the idea that England was justified in entertaining any fears of France. "The military restlessness of France," he said, "is more than satiated. France requires repose; France requires peace; France requires economy; France requires commerce. Commerce, economy, and peace constitute the natural and normal policy of England; and I say it is an opportunity for the noble Lord, possessing the

to Canada is worthy of some notice. During the

confidence of the House, and armed with the resources of this country, to appeal to one who still, in official parlance, is our ally, and who might, under the noble Lord's influence, still become our friend—it is, I say, in the noble Lord's power to come to some cordial understanding, sensible as well as cordial, between this country and France— . . . to put an end to these bloated armaments which naturally involve states in financial embarrassments."—*Ibid.* 1425-6. He took every opportunity, in this same session, of preaching that necessity for retrenchment. upon which during these years he was insisting in season and out of season. He was favourable to the idea of Mr. Stansfeld's motion, calling for a reduction in our expenditure (*Annual Register*, cxv. 91), and both in the debate on the Fortifications and Works Bill, on June 23, and in a debate on the Administration of Lord Palmerston on August 1, advocated the same idea. In the first he accused the Premier of escaping the consequences of his excessive expenditure by throwing the burden on posterity. "We have," said Mr. Disraeli, "had a war expenditure in time of peace, combined, and erroneously combined, with a system of finance that only a peace expenditure could justify. The consequences of that combination may alarm us and other Members of this House; but when these consequences begin to appear —and they may be nearer than we suppose—they will perhaps be no source of alarm to the noble Lord, because when his financial embarrassments commence, he is perfectly ready to draw upon posterity. To-night he is establishing a precedent which, if sanctioned by the House, will allow him to engage the expenditure of the country in worthless purposes of any sort with impunity."—*Ibid.* clxvii. 956-7. In the second speech—that on the Administration of Lord Palmerston—he declared that the Premier had spent £12,000,000 on the dockyards alone since he had obtained power. "What," asked Mr. Disraeli, "have we got for that money? I say that £12,000,000 were never expended in a manner more thoughtless, more inefficient, and producing less results."—*Ibid.* clxviii. 1136. He condemned the war in China as "entered into in the most rash and imprudent manner—part and parcel, indeed, of a most rash and imprudent system" (*Ibid.* 1137-8); he accused Palmerston of meaning "recklessly to play" with the different parties in the House, "for the gratification of his own ambition" (*Ibid.* 1139); and finally he summed up his idea of what the foreign policy of England ought to be, by declaring that we should be "vigilant to guard and prompt to vindicate the honour of the country," but that we ought at the same time to "hold aloof from that turbulent diplomacy which only distracts the mind of the people

period when a conflict appeared probable between this country and the United States in reference to what is known as the Trent affair, the Home Government despatched to Canada a body of 3,000 men, raising the force of British troops in the Dominion to 10,000. Curiously enough, the Conservative party found great fault with this measure, and took up, in dealing with the question, the ground that, by thus retaining a large force in our colonies, we diminished their necessity for, and accordingly their own power of, self-defence. Mr. Adderley (now Lord Norton), who introduced a motion on the question, said that we ought to adopt towards Canada one of two courses,—either to largely increase our force there, or to let it be distinctly understood by the Canadians that unless measures were taken for their self-defence, the British troops in the colony would be withdrawn.* And Mr. Disraeli joined in the complaint that by sending this force to Canada we did the colony harm, "thereby damping the ardour of the Canadians by indicating a desire to monopolise their defence."†

from internal improvement." It would be better for us "to lighten taxation," "frigidly but wisely to administer the public treasury."—*Ibid.* 1140. I think I might leave my contention that during the administration of Lord Palmerston Mr. Disraeli preached the thoroughly Radical doctrine of peace, retrenchment, and internal reform, to rest on his conduct in this single session of 1862. Of course, the reader will know that I am not blaming him for preaching such doctrines, or that I dissent from them. My point is, that while he taught such articles of public policy at one period of his career, he professed quite the opposite creed at another period: that, in addition to the sin of propagating false doctrine, he was also guilty of the offence of apostasy."

* *Ibid.* 118. † *Ibid.* 119.

In 1863, also, the civil war in America presented the chief subject of parliamentary discussion. Mr. Disraeli, while having the good sense to denounce the indications both on the part of the Government and by a section of its own supporters of a desire to give a recognition to the rebellious States, indulged in some prophecies about the future of America which are extremely amusing reading at the present time.*

In the debate on the Address in 1864, Mr. Disraeli made some attempt to rouse the Parliament from its subjection to the influence of Lord Palmerston, and described in somewhat contemptuous terms the unhesitating obedience which it gave on all occasions to what the Minister desired. He described the House of Commons as "fast drawing to that satisfactory condition which subsists between members of the French Chambers and their master;" † and then renewed his old charge that the Government endeavoured to obtain a policy for the House of Commons, instead of suggesting one themselves. "Humiliate us if you like," said Mr. Disraeli. "Degrade us if we must submit to it. But, at any rate, do not call on us to bear responsibility." ‡

* "I cannot conceal from myself the conviction that whoever in this House may be young enough to live to witness the ultimate consequences of this civil war will see, whenever the waters have subsided, a different America from that which was known to our fathers, and even from that of which this generation has had so much experience. It will be an America of armies, of diplomacy, of rival States and manœuvring Cabinets, of frequent turbulence, and probably of frequent wars."—*Annual Register*, 1863, N. S., cv. 21.

† Annual Register, 1864, N. S., cvi. 16.

‡ *Ibid.* 16.

Next, dealing with the question of peace or war, he said, "If we believe that this country is engaged in a just and fair quarrel, Parliament will support the Government, of whomsoever it may be formed. But let us be sure about the policy which we are pursuing. Let us be quite sure, if we go to war, first of all that it is a necessary and just war; and, secondly, if now necessary, whether it might not have been prevented by more astute and skilful management. . . . . If you have a policy, let it be brought forward fairly and candidly." *

In the course of this session, an episode occurred which, though it has no reference to a political question of any great importance, yet throws a strong light on some very important and characteristic traits in the personal character of Lord Beaconsfield. At this period Mr. Stansfeld was one of the Junior Lords of the Admiralty. The Procureur-Imperial of France, while engaged in prosecuting a man named Greco and others for a conspiracy to assassinate the Emperor of the French, made a statement to the effect that one of the accused persons had been found in possession of a letter telling him to write for money to Mr. Flowers, at 35, Thurloe Square, Brompton. This was the address of Mr. Stansfeld, and that gentleman admitted that he had allowed the Italian patriot Mazzini to have his letters addressed to 35, Thurloe Square, under the name of M. Fiori (the Italian equivalent for Flowers). The explanation, as was put forward more clearly

* *Ibid.* 17.

by Mr. P. A. Taylor, was to the effect that it would have been absurd to expect that any letters addressed to Mazzini in his own name from Italy would have had the least chance of reaching him. As Mr. Taylor remarked, "any letters so addressed might as well be burned as expected to be delivered to him in London."* Mr. Stansfeld at the same time denied that he had any knowledge whatever of the nature of the correspondence which passed between Mazzini and his friends. Mr. Disraeli made use of the occasion to deliver two most vehement attacks upon Mr. Stansfeld and against Mazzini.†

In the first of these speeches (March 14), he described Mazzini as "not only the votary and advocate, but the great promoter of assassination,"‡ and in the second (March 17), he accused Mr. Stansfeld of being in correspondence with "the assassins of Europe," "the advocates of anarchy throughout the Continent;" "of the men who point their poniards at the breast of our allies." §

Mr. Bright replied to Mr. Disraeli, calling him to account for the excessive bitterness of his onslaught on Mr. Stansfeld. Referring to some of the quotations

* Annual Register, 1864, N. S., 64.

† It is singularly noteworthy that Mr. Disraeli afterwards in "Lothair" introduces Mazzini as one of his characters, under the name of Mirafiori, a name suggested, it will be seen, by this debate, and he gives a very different (and indeed favourable) picture of him from that which he presents in the discussion on Mr. Stansfeld's action.

‡ Hansard, 3 S. clxxiii. 1938.

§ *Ibid.* clxxiv. 271-2.

made from writings of Mazzini, Mr. Bright remarked that one of those quotations came from a date so far back as thirty years before. "I don't know Mazzini's age," continued Mr. Bright, "but I believe that he might be at the time five-and-twenty. Consider what his compatriots in Italy have suffered. I think I have read that the right hon. Gentleman who just sat down, in one of his early writings, expressed opinions—it may be merely to excite a sensation amongst his readers—but still opinions very much like those to which the hon. Baronet has alluded to-night."*

The allusion of Mr. Bright was to a passage in the "Revolutionary Epick" which certainly had the appearance of defending assassination in some instances. Mr. Disraeli immediately stood up, and exclaimed, "There is not the slightest foundation for that statement. I give it the most unequivocal contradiction;" and this statement, according to the report in the *Morning Star* of the following day (March 18), was received by the Opposition with "cheers, and renewed cheers."—Mr. Bright accepted the explanation.†

But the most curious part of the whole transaction is that Mr. Disraeli, not satisfied with giving a contradiction in the House of Commons, published a new

* Hansard, 3 S. clxxiv. 275.

† "Doubtless, then," he said, "those who quoted writings said to be the right hon. Gentleman's were in error. I accept the right hon. Gentleman's statement freely, but I was not about to blame him."—*Ibid.* 275.

edition of his "Revolutionary Epick," in order to confirm the truth of his statement. When the new edition came to be compared with the one previously published in 1834, it was discovered that the passage referring to assassination, to which Mr. Bright had alluded, had been so garbled as to convey quite a different meaning.*

* I place side by side the passages as they appear in the two editions, leaving the reader to form his own conclusions:—

EDITION OF 1834.

Pharaoh's doom
Shall cool those chariot-wheels now hot with blood;
And blessed be the hand that dares to wave
The regicidal steel that shall redeem
A nation's sorrow with a tyrant's blood!
Lyridon. Canto xxiv. 127. Part ii.

EDITION OF 1864.

Dark Pharaoh's doom
Shall cool your chariot wheels, and hallowed be
The regicidal steel that shall redeem
A nation's woe.
Lyridon. Canto xxii. 107.

Another important passage was also so softened down as to be essentially different in meaning, as will be seen from putting extracts from the two editions side by side:—

EDITION OF 1834.

From the first moment that the wolf her mother,
Stern nurse of sterner children, poured her stream
Of martial milk from her immortal dug,
The spirit of her strong career was mine;
And the bold Brutus but propelled the blow,
Her own and nature's laws alike approved.
Lyridon. Canto xii. 108.

EDITION OF 1864.

Since the wolf her mother,
Stern nurse of sterner children, from her dug
Immortal poured her stream, Rome's strong career
Was mine; the blow bold Brutus struck, her fate.
Lyridon. Canto xi. 95.

It might be argued, in favour of Lord Beaconsfield, that he is not to be held responsible for the opinions he puts in the mouth of one

The reader has been made so familiar with adventures of a like nature in the course of Lord Beaconsfield's career, that I need not here further dwell upon this episode. This only is worthy of observation in reference to the matter, that it is rather astonishing to find Mr. Disraeli carrying into the maturity of middle age, and into the importance of his great position, the extraordinary and fantastic tricks with truth which

of his characters; but his own act deprives him of this escape. If those passages in the edition of 1834 were innocent, why did he garble them in the subsequent edition? The new edition, I ought to mention, was prefaced by a dedication to Lord Stanley (now Lord Derby). Mr. Disraeli declares he had sometimes regretted, as it had "long been improbable" he "should ever publish another work," that he could never avail himself of the most graceful privilege of a writer, and inscribe upon a page the name of one to whom "I am indebted for an interesting and faithful friendship." "But," proceeds Lord Beaconsfield, "as the unforeseen always occurs, an occasion has offered for the pleasing office, which I could never have contemplated." Then he proceeds to say that thirty years before, he had printed a portion of a poem, "the nature of which" had "unexpectedly become the subject of public controversy." Only fifty copies had been printed, and as the controversy as to its contents might become "recurrent and interminable," he thinks the "simplest course, and one which might save me trouble hereafter," would be to republish the Epick. The new edition was "printed from the only copy in my possession, and which, with slight exceptions, was correct in 1837, when after three years' reflection, I had resolved not only to correct, but to complete the work." Finally, we are told that the "*corrections are purely literary.*" The reader knows that the Epick was published first in 1834. To say that the corrections made in the edition of 1834 were "purely literary" was, of course, the reverse of true. It appears to me that Mr. Disraeli tries to muddle the question by talking of 1837, so as to avoid the direct statement that the 1864 edition had no corrections but "purely literary" ones on the edition of 1834. The suggestion, of course, however, is that the 1834 and the 1864 editions were the same. The reader can now judge of the veracity of that suggestion

constituted one of the most characteristic features in his early years of struggle and obscurity.*

In the session of 1865 Mr. Disraeli distinguished himself by again pandering to the religious and political prejudices of his supporters in opposing two wise and just measures. He renewed his opposition to the abolition of the offensive oaths which Roman Catholic members were obliged to take on entering the House.† In speaking on Mr. Baines' bill proposing an alteration in the borough franchise, he opposed Reform in words that his after-conduct made extremely memorable.

"All that has occurred," he said,—"all that I have observed, all the results of my reflections, lead me to

* Speaking during the recess, Mr. Disraeli discussed in a speech before the Oxford Diocesan Society (Nov. 25, 1864), the much-vexed question as to the origin of man. "The question is this: Is a man an ape or an angel? My lord, I am on the side of the angels."—*Irving*, 532. In "Tancred" the same question is discussed in a similar manner. Talking of "The Revelation of Chaos," by which I think the "Vestiges of Creation" is meant, Lord Beaconsfield, with bright sarcasm, makes a young lady, who is an *esprit fort*, thus describe the doctrine of evolution: "But what is most interesting, is the way in which man has been developed. You know, all is development. The principle is perpetually going on. First, there was nothing; then, there was something; then—I forget the next—I think there were shells; then fishes; then we came. Let me see—did we come next? Never mind that; we came at last. And the next change then, will be something very superior to us—something with wings. Ah! that's it: we were fishes, and I believe we shall be crows!"—*Tancred*, new edition, 109. There are numberless other passages in Lord Beaconsfield's writings and speeches which display the same vehement hostility as those just quoted to atheistic teaching. He appears to me to have the thoroughly Hebrew belief in the personal God of the Old Testament.

† Annual Register, cvii. 86.

this more and more—that the principle upon which the constituencies of this country should be increased is one *not of radical,* but, I may say, of *lateral* reform — the extension of the franchise, *not its degradation."**

In the General Election of 1865, Mr. Disraeli again stood for Bucks, and was again elected. As to the address which he delivered on his election, I need only refer to the passage in which he reiterated the opinions he had so often expressed in favour of a foreign policy of conciliation and non-intervention.†

I have now finished my survey of Mr. Disraeli's action throughout the many years in which he was leader of the Opposition, and the Liberal party was mainly represented by Lord Palmerston. I shall briefly summarise what I have written by saying that his

* *Ibid.* 113.

† "I am," he said, "not in favour of non-intervention; because there is no such word in the English language. But if you mean by that barbarism that you don't think it for the interest of England that England, under any circumstances, should meddle with the affairs of other countries, I am equally opposed to that view. There are occasions when the honour and interests of England may authorise an interference; but I think it requires an unmistakable expression of feeling on the part of the nation before you can determine that its honour is concerned, and it requires on the part of the Minister great sagacity, great knowledge, and the possession of the highest qualities of a public man, before he can decide even that the interests of England are concerned in each case."—*Bucks Herald,* July 15, 1865. "I am myself," he proceeded, "in favour of a Conservative foreign policy—a policy which believes that the tranquillity of the world is the interest of England, that peace is the normal aim, and that in the tranquillity of the world the state or best objects of English ambition may be legitimately obtained. I do not think it is the duty or interest of England to ally itself with the

policy was characterised by three leading principles: (1) No disinclination to embarrass the Government when dealing with a foreign question of great difficulty; (2) Hostility to anything like extensive Reform; and (3) Constant adherence to the Radical creed of peace, retrenchment, and internal reform. We approach a period when we shall see how far he was true in office to those principles he had so strenuously and persistently advocated during his many years of opposition.

The death of Lord Palmerston, in 1865, led to the Premiership of Earl Russell, and the assumption by Mr. Gladstone of the post of leader of the House of Commons. The new Ministers had not long been in power when, true to their traditions, they determined to bring in a Reform Bill. The measure introduced by them was of a very moderate character indeed. While

revolutionary party of the world. If you do, I don't see how you can avoid war; but if you hold to the great principle of a Conservative foreign policy, you have a greater chance of avoiding it. I look on the power of England as a moderating and mediating power; and if war occurs in the world it is the business of England by her counsels, to prevent it if possible, and if she fails in that, to shorten its duration and soften its acerbity."—*Ibid.* And then he made the following remarkable declaration: "Since I have been in Parliament—now twenty-seven years—there has only occurred one occasion on which war was justifiable on our part, and even then it was a war which we could not enter on without hesitation, but still it was a war necessary for the interests of the world. That was the Crimean war, and on that ground I supported it. I have seen no cause since for the warlike interference of England in the affairs of Europe or America. I think it a fair boast for a Government if they can show that they have maintained the country at peace. But I am bound to say that the allegation on the part of the present Government cannot be sustained."—*Ibid.*

it reduced the county franchise to £14, it lowered that in the towns to £7. The reader will remember that the bill introduced by the Conservative Ministry in 1859 reduced the county franchise to £10, while the bill of Lord John Russell, introduced in the year following, lowered the county franchise to £10 and the borough franchise to £6. In other words, the Reform Bill of 1866 proposed a higher franchise for the counties than that proposed by Mr. Disraeli himself in 1859; and a higher, both as regards the counties and the boroughs, than the bill brought in by Lord John Russell in 1860. There was, therefore, every reason to hope that this bill would pass easily through the House of Commons. However, the Parliament which had been elected under the auspices of Lord Palmerston, though containing a Liberal majority, consisted of Liberals rather of the Whig type than of the more advanced school. The result was that a combination of parties was made against the measure, the anti-reforming Liberals joining with the Conservatives.

Shortly after the introduction of the measure, Earl Grosvenor gave notice of an amendment, the effect of which was that the House would not deal with the question of the franchise until the Government told them what they were afterwards prepared to do on the question of the redistribution of seats. The bill was brought on for second reading on the 12th of April; Earl Grosvenor moved his amendment, and a debate ensued which extended over eight nights. It was on the last night of the debate, and immediately before

Mr. Gladstone rose to reply, that Mr. Disraeli expressed his opinions upon the Bill. The speech had the same characteristics which I have noted in nearly all those on the question of Reform which Mr. Disraeli had delivered in previous years. He guarded himself from declarations which would preclude him from ever dealing with the question, but at the same time invented reasons for professing to believe that the bill before the House did not deal satisfactorily with the subject. Notwithstanding the mystery in which he endeavoured to involve his meaning, there are several passages which clearly show that his main objection to the bill was, that under it too large a proportion of the working classes would be admitted to the franchise.*

The amendment of Earl Grosvenor was lost by a majority of five, 313 to 318. On May 7, Mr. Gladstone, yielding to the objections of the House, brought in his Redistribution Bill. This measure was carried on the

* "The elements of the estate of the Commons must be numerous, and they must be ample, in an age like this, but *they must be choice.* Our constituent body should be numerous enough to be independent, *and select enough to be responsible.*"—Hansard, clxxxiii. 97. After this, endeavouring to reconcile his opposition to the present reduction of the franchise with the expression of an opinion not unfavourable to a similar reduction in 1859, he endeavoured to show that a great change had come over public opinion since then. In his opinion, now, "the men who formed the impartial and intelligent opinion of the country" thought "that, though they are desirous that the choicest members of the working classes should form a part—and no unimportant portion—of the estate of the Commons, *they recoil from and reject a gross and indiscriminate reduction of the franchise.*"—*Ibid.* 98-9. The reader will not be unamused to find the old figment of the estate reappearing in Mr. Disraeli's speculations on the constitution of the House of Commons.

14th, and then both it and the Franchise Bill were amalgamated. The two bills struggled on for some time with varying fortunes, but on June 18th an amendment of Lord Dunkellin, making the qualification dependent, not on rental, but on rating value, was carried by 315 to 304. Earl Russell and Mr. Gladstone resigned, and Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli once more took the reins of Government.

The gigantic and to some extent dangerous agitation in favour of Reform which followed the fall of the Gladstone Government, induced some members of the Derby Administration to come to the conclusion that the subject could no longer be shelved. Accordingly, when Parliament met, the Queen's speech was found to contain a paragraph announcing that the Government were about to deal with the question. This paragraph asked the House to discuss the proposals of the Ministry "in a spirit of moderation and mutual forbearance," and trusted that the result would be the production of a measure which, without unduly disturbing the balance of political power, "should freely extend the elective franchise."

On February 11th, Mr. Disraeli explained to the House of Commons the meaning of these words, and the explanation at once amazed and amused the House.

"Sir," said he, "the meaning that they"—the Ministers—"attribute to those words is that, under the circumstances in which the House finds itself, it was in our opinion expedient that Parliamentary

Reform should no longer be a question which should decide the fate of Ministries." *

These words, it is scarcely necessary to say, are utterly subservient of the principles upon which the Ministry hold office in a constitutionally governed country; nor is it necessary to more than recall, in a word to the reader, that Lord Beaconsfield himself has pointed out scores of times in his writings and speeches, that it is the duty of a Ministry to propose a policy to the legislature, and to stand or fall by that policy. The question of Reform was the chief question which at this moment divided parties, and no Government had a right to hold office except on the condition of some proposal on that subject upon which they were ready to stake their existence. Besides, it was on this very question of Reform that Mr. Disraeli had just succeeded in overthrowing the Government of Lord Russell and Mr. Gladstone. In the neat and laconic words of *Punch*, Mr. Disraeli's calm proposal was "Heads I win, tails you lose."

In the course of this speech Mr. Disraeli made several statements of an extraordinary but to us familiar character. As his Ministry was now dealing with the question of Reform, he found it necessary to prove—not that he and his party had changed their opinions upon the question—but that in all along opposing Reform, they had been really in its favour. In other words, he resorted to exactly the same tactics as he employed when he came into office in 1852. Then he obtained

* Hansard, 3 S. clxxxv. 215

power as a friend of Protection and an enemy of Free Trade. Now he had obtained power as a friend of a restricted and an enemy of an extended franchise. But as in 1852 he endeavoured to show that while opposing Free Trade he was steadily supporting it, so he endeavoured to prove now that in opposing the extension of the franchise, he was really all the time in its favour. In working out this strange thesis, he made the marvellous assertion that Reform had never been a party question, and he pledged himself to the assertion that Lord Derby, the late Duke of Richmond, Lord George Bentinck, and others "came to the resolution that if Lord John Russell gave up the Act of 1832, nothing would induce them to take up a position of opposition to Parliamentary Reform;" "and their course," added Mr. Disraeli, "has been consistent throughout. There never was a Bill brought forward on the subject of which the second reading was opposed by us."*

With regard to the "resolutions" of Lord Derby and others, I confess I should much prefer to hear their own testimony to that of Mr. Disraeli: I pass, then, to Mr. Disraeli's assertions about his own conduct. It is quite true that he did not oppose the second reading of the various Reform Bills, but the suggestion that he did not obstruct the question of Reform is utterly and audaciously false. He did not oppose the second reading for two very good reasons: first, because he was in a hopeless minority; and, secondly, because there was quite enough of false Liberalism on the

* *Ibid.* 223.

Treasury Bench, and on the other Liberal benches generally, to defeat the attempts of the different Ministries to deal with the question. In point of fact, then, the reason why Mr. Disraeli and his friends had not opposed the second reading of those Reform Bills was not that he or his party did not wish them to be defeated, but that they thought it strategically better to allow the Bills to be defeated by the false sections of the Liberal party itself. Mr. Disraeli, to prove his case, should have shown that he and his party had resisted all temptations to defeat Reform which the divided state of the Liberal party placed in their way. He should have shown that he and his party had not eagerly joined in every combination against Reform, and rejoiced over every successive defeat of every successive measure for its advancement. And Mr. Disraeli personally should have done more. He should have been able to blot for ever words from his own mouth session after session, time after time, against any real extension of franchise, which are inscribed on the immutable tablets of Hansard.

Mr. Disraeli wound up his ingenuous speech by the statement that he thought the best plan for proceeding with the subject was by resolution, and he invited the House to co-operate with him in passing these resolutions, in terms as 'umble as could have been employed by Uriah Heep himself.* When we contrast the

* "And although we are not prepared in any way to shrink from the leading principles of the policy that we hope may be sanctioned, we still believe that in a question of this paramount importance, if

almost cringing demeanour of Lord Beaconsfield to Parliament when he was in a minority with the contempt he afterwards displayed towards the same body when a large and stupid majority allowed him to play the dictator, we have another proof of the fact that those who in adversity are the most abject, are in prosperity the most insolent.

When the Resolutions were put on the table, they were found to be of the most vague and abstract character. The first, for instance, confined itself to the elementary assertion that the number of electors for boroughs and towns in England and Wales ought to be increased. February 25 was the day fixed for the consideration of these Resolutions; but when that day arrived, Mr. Disraeli made an extraordinary change of front: in place of proposing the Resolutions, he proceeded to detail to the House the outlines of a Bill. This, of course, was altogether different from his original plan, which was that the Resolutions should be passed first, and a Bill after. Obviously, if a Bill were prepared by the Government, the Resolutions were unnecessary. For

the House deigns to co-operate with us and come into council with us, many suggestions of great value will be made which may add to the fulness and completion of the consummation. I can only say on the part of my colleagues that those suggestions will be received not merely with candour, but, if found to deserve the acceptance of the House and appear for the public advantage, they will be accepted with gratitude."—*Hansard*, 3 S. clxxxv. 241. Immediately afterwards he says: "We shall enter into the Committee and avail ourselves of all that the learning, the genius, the experience of the House can suggest for the solution of this question; and to all we shall give a cordial and a candid deference."—*Ibid.* 242.

instance, one of the proposals of the new Bill was that the franchise in the towns should be reduced to a £6 rating qualification. That single proposal immediately disposed of no less than the first four of the Resolutions. A £6 rating franchise increased the electorate, and therefore disposed of the first Resolution, which laid down the abstract proposition that the number of the electors ought to be increased: it lowered the qualification, and therefore disposed of the second Resolution, which simply stated that the qualifying value should be reduced; it was founded on the principle of rating, and therefore disposed of the fourth Resolution, which simply affirmed that the qualification should be based on rating: and it disposed of the third Resolution, which stated that the alterations made in the franchise should not give any class a predominating influence, because Mr. Disraeli would have doubtless contended that such would have been the effect of his proposal. In the face of those facts, it was monstrously absurd to proceed simultaneously with the Resolutions and the Bill. This was pointed out by Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Lowe, and Mr. Bright in succession. But Mr. Disraeli had carefully avoided giving any indication in his introductory speech as to what he intended to do with his Resolutions. Mr. Walpole was, therefore, allowed to say that the withdrawal of the Resolutions would be an "utter mistake."* When, however, it came to Mr. Disraeli's turn to make a reply, he threw Mr.

* *Ibid.* 975.

Walpole and his Resolutions at the same time overboard; professing a mild desire to retain a few of them. This was, of course, a mere device for covering his retreat. The very next day he announced the unconditional withdrawal of all the Resolutions, including those he had professed, on the previous day, such an anxiety to preserve. He added the important announcement that he would now set himself to the preparation of a Bill, and would introduce it in the course of the following eight or ten days.

We have now seen two acts in the extraordinary drama to which Mr. Disraeli was treating the country. We have seen it first proposed that the House of Commons should proceed by Resolution; and this scheme having been quietly dropped, the House is promised a Reform Bill with a £6 rating franchise. In a few days more there was another and a stranger transformation.

On March 4 Lord Derby announced in the House of Lords, and Mr. Disraeli in the House of Commons, the resignation of Lord Cranborne (now Lord Salisbury), Lord Carnarvon, and General Peel. In the course of his explanation, Lord Derby stated that the Cabinet had had before them two schemes for dealing with the franchise—the one making a smaller and the other a larger extension of the franchise. The former scheme —the £6 rating proposal—was adopted in deference to the objections of those three colleagues; but the Government had determined to recur to their original scheme, which had met the approval of the majority

of the Cabinet, and those three Ministers had, as a consequence, resigned.*

Lord Derby was not very explicit as to what was the nature of the original scheme, to which his Government had recurred. It was soon, however, known that it was Household Suffrage, modified by certain compensations; and the point on which Lord Derby split with his three colleagues was as to the value of these compensations.† In the opinion of the Premier they were real; in that of his colleagues they were valueless.‡ I must ask the reader to pay particular attention to this last point. Its importance is manifest. The Bill brought in by Lord Derby was a moderate or an extreme one, according to whether his judgment or that of his former colleagues was correct as to these compensations. This will be seen more clearly when I describe what the proposed compensations were.

Thus, then, we have another extraordinary transformation in the plans of the Government. The £6 Rating Bill, which had taken the place of the abandoned Resolutions, is now itself abandoned. That Bill, as Mr. Gladstone pungently put it afterwards

* *Ibid.* 1284-128

† *Ibid.*

‡ Lord Carnarvon declared the compensations in practice "illusory."—*Ibid.* 1290. General Peel said that "a security as a security is of no use whatever."—*Ibid.* 1347. "The idea," said Lord Cranborne, ". . . was to give an enfranchisement with a certain compensation or counterpoise. . . . On the Sunday evening I came to the conclusion that . . . the figures . . . would scarcely operate, practically otherwise than as a household suffrage."—*Ibid.* 1349.

" was born and died on Monday evening, the 25th of February."*

Mr. Disraeli gave the House of Commons two expositions of the Ministerial change. In the first, he merely said a few formal words, in which nothing calls for comment except the fact that he expressed regret for the loss of but one of his three colleagues; and that colleague was not Lord Cranborne (now Marquis of Salisbury), nor the Earl of Carnarvon. This was on March 4.

On March 5, the day following, he entered into the second and more detailed history of the reasons why the £6 Rating Bill had been abandoned. The explanation he gave, the reader will be prepared to know, was rather strange, and did not well bear the examination to which it was afterwards subjected. The reasons for abandoning the Bill, which Mr. Disraeli gave, were three. First, Lord Derby and he had learned that the Bill was not acceptable to the House of Commons generally. But how, in the face of the fact that the Bill had not even been printed, did Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli learn that it was not acceptable to the House of Commons generally? The second reason was that the Bill was found to be particularly objectionable to the Tory party. But as they, any more than the Liberals, had not had the opportunity of seeing the Bill in print, it was hard to understand how they could have so readily condemned the measure; and would they have found a £6 Rating Bill objectionable if they

* *Ibid.* 1354.

knew that it was the alternative of a Bill founded on a household franchise? Finally, the third reason which Mr. Disraeli offered was that the Ministry had been informed that at a meeting in Mr. Gladstone's house the Liberal party had agreed to accept no Bill which did not reduce the franchise to a £5 rating; but this reason was even worse than the other two. As Mr. Gladstone afterwards stated, no such resolution had been adopted by the Liberals at the meeting alluded to; and in fact the question of a £5 rating had practically not been referred to at all.*

And thus we see that this explanation of a revolutionary change in the plan of a Ministry in dealing with a question so great as the representation of the people was justified by reasons of which two were open to considerable doubt, and the third was based on a rumour that turned out to be completely unfounded!

On May 18, Mr. Disraeli laid before the House the great and final measure of the Government. Its main and essential feature was that it gave a vote to every-

* This statement about the meeting at Mr. Gladstone's was at once received by the Opposition with cries of "No, no!" Mr. Disraeli endeavoured to retrieve his position by saying that that was the information which had reached him and his colleagues. "Probably," he went on to say, "it was not accurate, and much of the information which reaches you about us is equally unauthentic."—*Hansard*, clxxxv. 1343. Mr. Gladstone gave a very crushing rejoinder to this attempt of Mr. Disraeli to escape from his difficulty: "The right hon. Gentleman says that if he has received inaccurate information, we also are subject to the like misfortune. That may be so, but the difference is this—we do not found our statements in Parliament upon it, nor do we, upon inaccurate information, base decisions of vital consequence in matters of public policy. . . . ."—*Ibid.* 1356.

body in England and Wales who was the occupier of a house. In other words, the chief spokesman of the Tory party, which had always opposed a reduction of the franchise, reduced it to an extent infinitely beyond any contemplated by even the most Liberal Ministry that had yet been in office. To this stupendous desertion of principle it is only necessary to point; comment would only weaken the effect of the mere statement of fact. Nor need I more than make a passing observation on the essential difference between this surrender of principle by Mr. Disraeli, and that surrender of principle by Peel in 1846, on the denunciation of which Lord Beaconsfield laid the foundation of his future greatness. It was not, as Mr. Disraeli himself was careful to inform the House,—it was not upon the question of Free Trade and Protection, pure and simple, that Peel had succeeded in ousting Lord John Russell from office. The Corn Law and the Tariff of 1842 went almost as far in a Free-Trade direction as Russell would have been willing at that period to advance. In Mr. Disraeli's case, on the contrary, he had succeeded to office distinctly on this question of the franchise. And, again, Peel's surrender of Protection was deferred for five years after his rise to power, and did not take place on the very morrow of the day on which he had succeeded in overthrowing a Free-Trade Ministry. Mr. Disraeli's proposal of a revolutionary reduction in the franchise, on the contrary, followed, without the interval of even a single session, on his defeat of a Ministry which proposed a

moderate reduction of the franchise. On every occasion up to 1874, on which Lord Beaconsfield attained power, he was guilty of a completer and more sudden act of tergiversation than that of the Minister whom he had denounced and dethroned.

I have said that the main proposal in Mr. Disraeli's Bill was that there should be household suffrage. He saddled this proposal, however, with conditions which, if retained, would have to a considerable extent destroyed its effect. To those conditions I call particular attention. They are the compensations which did in the opinion of Lord Derby, and did not in that of Lords Cranborne and Carnarvon, and General Peel, so neutralise the basis of household suffrage as to make the measure moderate, in place of extreme. Moreover, these conditions, the reader will find, are not merely qualifying features of the Bill, but are part and parcel of the Bill itself.

One of the provisions of the measure was dual voting. There were also, in addition to the household franchise, a number of what are called "fancy franchises." For instance, everybody who paid 20*s.* yearly* in direct taxation was entitled to a vote; so was any person who had £50 in the funds or a savings bank;† and there was also an educational qualification.‡ It will be seen at once how the clause upon dual voting would act. A householder who paid 20*s.* yearly in direct taxation would under the dual voting system

* Hansard, clxxxvi. 17.
† *Ibid.* 18.
‡ *Ibid.*

have one vote as a householder and a second vote as paying this direct tax. In other words, as Mr. Gladstone put it afterwards, a person could purchase an additional vote upon payment of 20*s.* yearly.*

But ridiculous as was this proposal of dual voting, and liable as it was to produce the most extraordinary injustices in operation, there was another provision of the Bill which was even more ridiculous, and which would have produced more unjust and absurd consequences. In the course of his speech Mr. Disraeli made the statement that in the previous session the House of Commons "had asserted a principle with regard to the borough franchise;" † or, as he put it a few moments afterwards, "a great decision was arrived at by the unerring instinct of the House." ‡ This great decision, arrived at by the "unerring instinct" of the House, Mr. Disraeli described to be that a vote should be granted to those only who were rated to the poor, and who themselves paid their rates. ‖

Now what will the reader think when he finds that

* *Ibid.* 41-2. "But," said Mr. Gladstone, "when the right hon. Gentleman proposes a franchise not only for income tax, but for assessed taxes, I declare, and I will show—and not I alone, but all who take the pains to consider the subject—that the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman is simply equivalent to a proclamation to every man with a purse in his pocket that he may make votes on any scale he pleases for 20*s.* a year. A man who chooses to dab a little hair-powder on his head is liable to pay 23*s.* a year. A man who chooses to pay the servants' tax may have the vote. A man who chooses to hand about, not the body, but the property, of a miserable three-legged jade may qualify 365 persons with a single horse that may not perhaps have cost him £3."

† *Ibid.* 9. ‡ *Ibid.* 10. ‖ *Ibid.*

this great decision, arrived at by the "unerring instinct" of the House, had not been arrived at by the House at all? The allusion of Mr. Disraeli evidently was to the amendment of Lord Dunkellin, the carrying of which by a majority of eleven had overthrown the Russell Ministry. But what was the nature of that amendment? It was not that a man should be rated to the poor and should himself pay his rates. It was that the qualification to the vote should depend on the rating, and not the rental value of a house; taking no notice whatever of the fact whether the occupant himself was rated, or himself paid his rates.* And, moreover, Mr. Gladstone had pointed out, in the course of the debate in the previous session on this amend-

* *Ibid.* 29-30. "And the right hon. Gentleman," said Mr. Gladstone, "says that last summer the House of Commons, by its unerring instinct, and without knowing it, established this great principle of rating. And how did it establish it? . . . . Why, Sir, the right hon. Gentleman says it was done by adopting the Motion made by my noble Friend the Member for Galway (Lord Dunkellin), the effect of which was that the basis of the franchise was to be found in admitting to the constituencies only men who were rated to the relief of the poor and who paid their rates. These are the two columns of the Constitution," said Mr. Gladstone, "and these two columns were built up on the night when my noble Friend succeeded in defeating the measure of the Government. Well, Sir, I go back to the Motion of my noble Friend the Member for Galway, and I affirm that it had no more to do with either the one or the other of those columns of the Constitution than chalk has to do with cheese. The Motion of the noble Member for Galway simply provided that the pecuniary measure of the franchise should be founded upon rateable value instead of gross estimated rental. It was perfectly indifferent, as far as that motion was concerned, whether a man were rated or not, and whether he paid his rates or not; and under the terms of the Motion of the noble Lord I would undertake to get rid completely of all personal liability to rating and obligation to pay rates."

ment of Lord Dunkellin's, the limits of its effect. He had said that if the amendment were to mean that the occupant should be rated to the poor, and pay his rates himself, it would require enlargement. As it stood, however, it simply made the franchise dependent on the rateable and not the rental value of the house.*

I have now shown how utterly incorrect Mr. Disraeli was in putting forward a decision of the House of Commons as giving authority for his proposal. Let us now see what the effect of his proposal would be. His proposition was that nobody should have a vote unless he himself were rated for the poor, and he himself paid the rates. According to Mr. Disraeli himself, the effect would be to disfranchise nearly five-sevenths of the householders of England.† And so a measure which professed to give a vote to all the householders of England, came, by this rating regulation, to give it to less than one-third of them. Here is how Mr. Disraeli's proposal produced such an extraordinary result. In a large number of boroughs, the rates were paid, not by the tenant, but by the landlord. This mode of collection was established by a statute known as the Small Tenements Act. The reason of this enactment was the obvious one that the collection of rates from the many and generally speaking poor tenants would have been

* *Ibid.* 30.

† *Ibid.* 11-12. His calculation was that there were 237,000 persons rated and paid their rates; those would receive votes; while 486,000 householders, not paying their rates personally, would not.

a much more expensive process than their collection from the single and in most cases wealthier landlord. The rating which the landlord paid was of course added to the rent which he charged. The Small Tenements Act applied, according to Mr. Disraeli himself, to fifty-eight boroughs entirely, and to portions of ninety more.* The householder who thus paid his rates, not personally, but indirectly through his landlord, came to be known as the compound householder. Mr. Disraeli's proposal gave the vote to the householder who paid directly; it took it away from the householder who paid the rate through his landlord. In other words, it disfranchised all the compound householders in England and Wales! And as this proposal came to be more thoroughly sifted in its details, it was found to involve consequences even more monstrously absurd. It was shown afterwards that, owing to local Acts, the registration of compound occupiers varied in parishes even side by side with each other. Thus, to take the remarkable instance pointed out by Mr. Gladstone, 5,781 compound householders were placed on the parliamentary registry in the borough of Lambeth, while in the neighbouring borough of St. Giles, only five compound householders out of 4,921 tenements, at and above £10 rental, were on the registry.† And thus Mr. Disraeli's proposal would have the effect of giving five householders a vote in St. Giles, Camberwell, and nearly 6,000 a vote in Lambeth. There were many other strange results

* *Ibid.* 12. † *Ibid.* 32-3.

involved in connection with Mr. Disraeli's extraordinary bill, which I cannot stop to go into. Let me pass on to Mr. Disraeli's proposal for dealing with the question of the county franchise. In approaching this question he had also before him a great decision to which the "unerring instinct" of the House had led it in the previous session. While Lord Dunkellin's amendment in favour of rating against rental value in boroughs had been carried, a similar amendment, proposed by Sir Rainald Knightley, in favour of rating instead of a rental value in the counties, had been rejected. Mr. Disraeli, who found one great decision arrived at by the "unerring instinct" of the House as sacredly binding, treated the second great decision, made by the same "unerring instinct," as having no importance whatever. Accordingly, he threw overboard the vote of the House of Commons on the county franchise, and proposed a £15 franchise in counties, founded on a rating value.*

Mr. Gladstone, who rose immediately after Mr. Disraeli, announced open war against the absurd and unjust restrictions with which Mr. Disraeli sought to

* *Ibid.* 20-21. It almost takes one's breath away to read the audacious misrepresentations in which Mr. Disraeli ventured to indulge in reference to this vote on the county franchise. He described the vote as "brought on in a languid House," amid ominous cries of "Oh, oh!" from the Opposition. Then he substituted "in a very thin House." This provoked another burst of exclamatory scepticism, and accordingly Mr. Disraeli endeavoured to change his ground. "*It was decided, I grant, in a very full House.*"—Hansard, clxxxvi. 20. This, of course, was the point at issue. The importance of the decision of the House obviously depended, not on the number of people who were present when the discussion begun, but upon the number who voted.

load his measure. To the dual vote, Mr. Gladstone would give his "implacable hostility;"* indeed, that proposal he described as "dead already;"† and, the other checks were dismissed with equally contemptuous disapproval. Mr. Gladstone summarised their fate in a single significant word: they should, he said, "go."‡

This was assuredly a strange, not to say unprecedented announcement by the leader of an Opposition with regard to a Government measure. It meant that the proposal of the Ministry was to be so utterly transformed, as to be essentially different from its original shape; and that this was to be done in obedience to the wishes of the party out of office. In other words, it was a complete reversal of the old constitutional doctrine that the party in power should also represent the principles which the majority of the House of Commons approved.

And the House of Commons recognized this strange revolution in the ordinary state of parliamentary affairs. Was Mr. Disraeli, the man in power, going to resist or yield to those imperious demands of Mr. Gladstone, the man out of office? This was a point on which Lord Cranborne (now the Marquis of Salisbury) was particularly anxious to be informed. As he justly said, the Bill as it now stood would be quite different from a Bill modified according to Mr. Gladstone's dictation. If modified as Mr. Gladstone demanded, the Bill would establish household suffrage pure and simple; and this was a proposition which

* *Ibid.* 41. † *Ibid.* 44. ‡ *Ibid.*

Lord Cranborne expected to see met by "a firm—I might almost say indignant refusal." "Just think for a moment," went on his lordship, "of the figure they" —the Government—"would assume, the aspect they would wear in the eyes of their countrymen, if, after all we did last year, they became the instruments of engrafting household suffrage pure and simple upon the constitution of this country."* Lord Cranborne might have added, that, in addition to the general breach of principle which would be involved in such action by the Ministry, there would be the breach of a particular and recent engagement to himself and the two other gentlemen who had left the Ministry. They had been, as I have already remarked, given distinctly to understand that the Ministry would stand by the checks, which would make household suffrage a restricted instead of a revolutionary reduction of the franchise.

I need not weary the reader with any details as to what followed. He by this time, probably, is sufficiently familiar with Mr. Disraeli's line of ministerial conduct to anticipate the result. He will not, therefore, be surprised to hear that Mr. Disraeli sacrificed practically every one of the checks upon household suffrage to which the Liberal party was opposed. The main principle of Mr. Disraeli's Bill was that no householder should have a vote who did not personally pay his rates to the poor; and the effect of this, as I have shown, would be to practically disfranchise the whole body

* *Ibid.* 84-5.

of compound householders. An amendment was proposed by Mr. Hodgkinson, which provided that the occupier, in future, instead of the landlord, should be rated for personal rates. The amendment, in other words, by abolishing the arrangement by which the landlord paid the rates in place of the occupier, abolished what was called the compound householder, and, as a consequence, the compound householder's disfranchisement. To the amazement of all sides of the House, Mr. Disraeli gave his "cordial acquiescence"* to this revolutionary change in his measure, and, indeed, was so eager in his welcome of the amendment that he proposed to accept it almost without further discussion. Lord Cranborne, however, strongly protested against "a change which involves the certain admission, instead of the contingent and doubtful admission, of some 500,000 people to the franchise," "without giving to the House and the country more than three hours, at least, to think over the alteration proposed."† Mr. Disraeli consented, in answer to this vigorous protest, to postpone the final settlement of the point; but he ultimately accepted Mr. Hodgkinson's proposal, slightly varied in unimportant details.

The dual vote was abandoned even more readily, and Mr. Gladstone's statement that it was dead the very evening it was born, turned out correct: the dual vote was surrendered before the bill was read a

* *Ibid.* clxxxvii. 725.
† *Ibid.* 756.

second time, Mr. Disraeli pronouncing its epitaph with the calm observation that he had hoped that some stray philosopher would have risen to say something in its behalf, and "lent dignity to our forlorn position."* Again, Mr. M'Cullagh Torrens proposed a resolution establishing the lodger franchise. This was a proposal at utter variance with what Mr. Disraeli stated was the central principle of his Bill,—the great principle which the House, with "unerring instinct," had arrived at in the previous session, and which Mr. Disraeli felt bound to follow in his new Bill. Mr. Disraeli insisted that nobody should have a vote unless he was rated to the poor and paid his rates. But the lodger, it is scarcely necessary to point out, is not rated to the poor, and does not pay his rates. Mr. Disraeli, notwithstanding, accepted Mr. M'Cullagh Torrens' proposal, and promised himself to bring in a clause embodying it. He lowered the county qualification from £15 to £12. He abandoned the two fancy franchises—the educational and the pecuniary—without even going to a division. He abandoned the clause allowing the use of voting papers, although he declared it "founded on truth and justice;" and he abandoned the proposal to join the University of Durham with that of London in electing a member. Finally, after he had strongly condemned and succeeded in defeating the motion of Mr. Laing,† to give a

* *Ibid.* clxxxvi. 663.

† "I believe," said Mr. Disraeli, "that the tendency of our modern civilization is rather to reduce than to increase the number of representatives of large towns."—*Ibid.* clxxxvii. 1960. Referring to the

third member to towns with over 150,000 inhabitants, Mr. Disraeli accepted the almost identical proposition to give an additional member to Liverpool, Manchester, and Birmingham, although he had allowed a subordinate to vehemently denounce the proposal in an earlier part of the evening.*

On the third reading, this successive surrender, one after another, of the principles of the Bill, until it became utterly transformed from its original shape, was sharply attacked by Lord Cranborne. The noble lord pointed out that every single one of the alterations demanded by Mr. Gladstone in the Bill had been made; denounced this acceptance of a democratic measure by men who had always professed to be the opponents of democracy; and in a fine peroration, described Mr. Disraeli's conduct as "a policy of legerdemain," and as involving a political betrayal which had no parallel in our parliamentary annals.†

particular case of Manchester, he said, "I believe that two Members for Manchester will do their business much better than a larger number."—*Ibid.* 1959.

* Mr. Adderley (now Lord Norton), speaking on the part of the Government on this question, said that "if they accepted the principle involved in this clause, they would adopt a total innovation upon an old-established principle of our representation. . . . . It was the introduction of the American principle of representation by numbers, and an abandonment of the English principle of representation of places. . . . . The new principle would degrade the functions of the members of that House. . . . . "—*Ibid.* clxxxviii. 814. It would "turn the members themselves into mere counters, and degrade the principle of a deliberative assembly."—*Ibid.* 817.

† I append some of the principal passages from this vigorous speech. "I see with enormous astonishment that the passing of this Bill is spoken of as a Conservative triumph. . . . . I wish to know

I need not pause to quote the speeches of some othe Conservative members who protested against the betrayal by a Conservative Government of Conservative principles ; nor need I make any further reference to Mr. Disraeli's reply than that he repeated some of his most notoriously inaccurate statements, and that, in fact, he "brazened" the thing out. Suffice it to

whether this Bill, as is generally supposed, is exclusively the offspring of the Government, or whether the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Lancashire (Mr. Gladstone) has not had something to do with it. If he has, it follows as an indisputable axiom that it cannot be a Conservative triumph. Now I heard the demands which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Lancashire made on the second reading of the Bill. . . . Most of the Members on this side of the House who heard the speech made by the right hon. Gentleman on that occasion, thought that it was imperious in its tone, and I do not deny that there was a stringency in the language employed which could only have been justified by the character of those to whom it was addressed. Imperious language can only be justified by the obsequiousness with which it is obeyed. Now I have sketched lightly the demands made on that occassion by the right hon. Gentleman. They are ten in number:—First, he demanded the lodger franchise. Well, the lodger franchise has been given. Secondly, and this is the only doubtful one, provisions to prevent traffic in votes. Such provisions, however, are to be contained in another Bill. The right hon. Gentleman next demanded the abolition of obnoxious distinctions between compounders and non-compounders. Not only have these obnoxious distinctions been abolished, but all distinctions whatever have disappeared. The fourth demand of the right hon. Gentleman was that the taxing franchise should be omitted. It has been omitted. Fifthly, that the dual vote should be omitted. It has been omitted. Sixthly, that the redistribution of seats must be considerably enlarged. It has been enlarged full 50 per cent. Seventhly, that the county franchise must be reduced. It has been reduced to something like the point at which it stood in the proposal of last year. Eighthly, that the voting papers must be omitted. To my extreme regret, the voting papers have been omitted. The last two demands were that the educational and savings banks franchises should be omitted. . . . . The campaign

quote as a specimen the one statement that this revolutionary measure of Reform embodied "the chief principles of the policy which we"—the Con-

which we are now concluding, the battle which you (the Opposition) have now won, was begun in the year 1852, when Lord Derby declared himself the bulwark against the advance of democracy. From that time forward his party took their tone, on all occasions, from their Leader's declaration. It was the natural attitude which they should assume, the consistent course which they should pursue on every occasion, that they should struggle to resist any further encroachments upon the limits prescribed by the Act of 1832. In the year 1859, after resisting time after time the proposals of the hon. Member for Leeds (Mr. Baines) and other hon. Members, they brought forward a Bill with the avowed intention of withstanding any further inroad upon the borough constituency. In the year 1860 they strenuously opposed the proposal of Lord Palmerston to the same effect. And so it went on; and this is the end of it—this is the ignominious conclusion—that Lord Derby's Government—the Tory Government—the Government of those Statesmen who prompted and encouraged that steadfast resistance, should in the end have proposed a change far more sweeping and extensive than any man had before submitted to the House of Commons. Of all the strange and mysterious marvels which we have seen in the course of the present Session, the one which has been to me the most strange is that the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer should have in this House and elsewhere denied that he and his party have changed their opinions. Why, Sir, when I remember last year . . . . when I remember what we all consulted together about last year, what we all desired together to do, what we were urged to do by our Leaders, what was the watchword between man and man, and when we all met together what was the common object which we all agreed in promoting, I am surprised that, after so short an interval of time has elapsed, they venture to say that they have not changed their opinions. I can only say that I was closely acquainted with the movements of last year, and I heard all the exhortations which were addressed to us . . . . and when such a statement is made I feel bound in my own defence to relieve myself of the charge of seeming factiousness, by making this statement, that never, from the beginning to the end of this campaign, was a word hinted that could lead us to believe that Lord Derby and the Conservative Leaders would have brought in a measure more extreme in the way of enfranchisement than

servative leaders—"have professed, and that we have always advocated"!*

the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Lancashire (Mr. Gladstone). If, as he seems sometimes to have intimated, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had any such scheme in his breast, I can only say that he covered it with an impenetrable veil—with a silence that was undoubtedly most judicious, because if the least hint had escaped him of what he intended to do, he never would have gained, on the 18th of June, that majority which placed him in power. . . . . After all, our theory of government is not that a certain number of statesmen should place themselves in office and do whatever the House of Commons bids them. Our theory of government is, that on each side of the House, there should be men supporting definite opinions, and that what they have supported in opposition they should adhere to in office; and that every one should know, from the fact of their being in office, that those particular opinions will be supported. If you reverse that, and declare that, no matter what a man has supported in opposition, the moment he gets into office it shall be open to him to reverse and repudiate it all, you practically destroy the whole basis on which our form of Government rests, and you make the House of Commons a mere scrambling place for office. You practically banish all honourable men from the political arena, and you will find, in the long run, that the time will come when your statesmen will become nothing but political adventurers; and that professions of opinion will be looked upon as so many political manœuvres for the purpose of attaining office. . . . . I entreat hon. Gentlemen opposite me not to believe that my feelings on this subject are dictated simply by my hostility to this particular measure, though I object to it most strongly, as the House is aware. But even if I took a contrary view —if I deemed it to be most advantageous, I still should deeply regret that the position of the Executive should have been so degraded as it has been it the present Session; I should deeply regret to find that the House of Commons has applauded a policy of legerdemain; and I should, above all things, regret that this great gift to the people—if gift you think it—should have been purchased at the cost of a political betrayal which has no parallel in our Parliamentary annals, which strikes at the root of all that mutual confidence which is the very soul of our party Government, and on which only the strength and freedom of our representative institutions can be sustained."—*Hansard*, 3 S. clxxxviii. 1527—1539.

* *Ibid.* 1611.

After Parliament had separated, the country was treated to another lengthy and elaborate explanation of Mr. Disraeli's action. On October 29 he was entertained at a banquet in Edinburgh. What I have already written spares me the necessity of entering into anything like a detailed reference to the remarkable oration he delivered on that occasion. I have quoted in an early part of this book one of its leading passages, the main effect of which was that the Tory party would be foolish in leaving to the Liberals the sole right of dealing with the question of Reform. I have shown how utterly at variance the opinions laid down in that passage are with the conduct of Mr. Disraeli when he found it convenient to accuse Sir Robert Peel of tergiversation, and so I may let that part of the speech drop. But there was another remarkable passage, which attracted a large amount of attention, and with regard to which Mr. Disraeli played a characteristic trick. Describing his action with regard to his own party on this question of Reform, he said, "I had to prepare the mind of the country, and to educate,—if it be not too arrogant to use such a phrase,—I had to educate our party; for a large party requires its attention, of course, to be called to questions of this character with some degree of pressure: I had to prepare the mind of Parliament and the country on this question of Reform."*

The plain interpretation of this passage was that Mr. Disraeli had to lead his blind and benighted

* *Scotsman*, Oct. 30, 1867.

followers into paths which they did not expect. In making this arrogant boast of his own deceptive powers, Mr. Disraeli was, as everybody knew, describing with perfect truth the relations between himself and his followers. It was quite true that Mr. Disraeli had throughout his whole tenure of office as Conservative leader employed his arts in making his party abandon the hapless and senseless principles which he and they had professed in opposition. When he came into power in 1852, his entire plan of action was designed to the purpose of making his party, which was obstinately Protectionist, adopt Free Trade; and his means for accomplishing this end was to so mystify and confuse the issues as to make his followers really think that they were supporting Protection when they were actually adopting Free Trade: and similarly in 1867, after he had given voice for years to the hostility to any reduction of the franchise, which was the leading principle of his party, he employed all his arts to make his party abandon their hostility to Reform by making out that household suffrage and hostility to Reform meant one and the same thing.

Nevertheless, the country, naturally enough, was astonished at this burst of egotistic frankness; and Mr. Disraeli found it necessary to make some departure from the amplenesses of confession into which the indiscretion of his triumph and his vanity had led him. Accordingly he produced an official copy of his speech, and in this official report the vain-glorious and significant

"I" is toned down to the softer and less candid "we." I have, however, taken the trouble to compare the reports of his speech which appeared in three Edinburgh papers on the day after its delivery, and I find that in every single one of them—in the *Scotsman*, in the *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, and in the *Edinburgh Daily Review*—the passage stands with the "I," and not with the "we." I place in a note the passage in the speech as it appears in the Edinburgh papers and as it afterwards appeared in the official report published by Mr. Disraeli.*

I have not time to comment in detail on the winter session which took place in consequence of the Abyssinian expedition, and I pass on without any further delay

* THE OFFICIAL REPORT.

"We had to prepare the mind of the country, to educate—if it be not arrogant to use such a phrase—to educate our party on this subject of Reform. It is a large party; and its attention can only be obtained to the consideration of a great question by the pressure which is secured by frequent discussion."—*The Chancellor of the Exchequer in Scotland*, 11.

EDINBURGH DAILY REVIEW.

"I had to prepare the mind of the country, and to educate—if it be not arrogant to use such a phrase—to educate our party. It is a large party, and requires its attention to be called to questions of this kind with some pressure."

EDINBURGH EVENING COURANT.

"I had to prepare the mind of the country—to educate, if it be not too arrogant to use such a phrase—to educate our party, which is a large party, and of course requires its attention to be called to questions of this character with some pressure; and I had to prepare the mind of Parliament and of the country in this question of Reform."

I have already given the version of the *Scotsman* in the text. I am

to February 17, when it became known that Lord Derby was seriously ill. On the 25th following Lord Derby resigned, and on the 26th it was announced that Mr. Disraeli had received from the Queen a letter stating that he had been selected as the successor to the Premiership. A curious incident was connected with this announcement of the Queen's intention. Her Majesty's secretary at that time was General Grey, whom we knew long ago as Colonel Grey, and as a candidate for the representation of High Wycombe. It was the successful rival of his youth that was the bearer to Mr. Disraeli of the letter announcing his accession to the object of his lifelong ambition.*

On February 27, Mr. Disraeli kissed hands on his appointment, and two days afterwards he signalized his accession to office by appointing Lord Cairns as successor in the Chancellorship to Lord Chelmsford. Lord Chelmsford had been, as will be remembered, a bitter and obstinate enemy of the emancipation of the Jews; and an impression was left that the new Premier had not dismissed his old and venerable colleague with as much courtesy as might have been expected.

not sure whether the report in the *Evening Courant* is an independent one; as it appears to have been an evening paper at this period—it is now published every morning—it may have copied its report from one in a morning journal. However, the agreement between the *Scotsman* and *Daily Review* as to the use of the word "I," while they disagree in some other points—is sufficient evidence that it was the boastful first person singular, and not the more modest first person plural, that Mr. Disraeli really employed.

* The *Owl*, quoted in Irving, 661.

On March 5, Mr. Disraeli took his seat in the House of Commons for the first time as Premier. He made a very short speech, and there was nothing particularly definite in what he said. He could only state that his policy would be one of peace, but not of peace at any price; that it would be a liberal policy—a "truly liberal" policy.*

He was not left long to enjoy the position he had gained.

The affairs of Ireland had now reached a point when it was no longer possible to leave them neglected. On March 10, the late Mr. John Francis Maguire proposed the appointment of a committee to inquire into the condition of that country. Lord Mayo was put up on the part of the Government to enunciate the policy of the Ministry, and it was evident that the object was to stay the impending attack on the Irish Church, and the injustice of Irish landlords, by a series of half measures. One of the proposals was very skilfully contrived. It was to give at the same time an increase of the *Regium donum* to the Presbyterians, and a charter to the Catholic University; and, although on this point the Ministry were studiously vague, to bestow upon the Irish clergy a State subsidy. However, these proposals met with but very little favour. Mr. Bright, amongst others, described them as recalling the mountebank of Addison who offered to the country people pills that were very good against the earthquake.† On March 16 the debate was wound up by Mr. Gladstone

* Irving, 664. † *Ibid.* 666-7.

and Mr. Disraeli. Mr. Gladstone gave it plainly to be understood that the Irish Church could no longer be allowed to exist, and that he and the Liberal party generally were prepared to carry through its disendowment and its disestablishment. Mr. Disraeli, in reply, endeavoured to explain away some of the ambiguous language of Lord Mayo, and announced his hostility to the proposed abolition of the Irish Church. He argued, among other things, that as the people of Ireland were a religious people, the Roman Catholic majority, who formed five-sixths of the population, were extremely anxious to pay for the religious services of the remaining one-sixth. Perhaps the most remarkable part of his speech was that in which he referred to his address on Ireland in 1844, of which I have already given the reader a sketch, and to which I promised to return on a future occasion. In that speech, it will be remembered, Mr. Disraeli stated that the evils of Ireland were, among other things, "a starving population, an absentee aristocracy, and an alien Church."* As the proposals of Mr. Gladstone and the Liberal party were to help that starving population, to deprive that absentee aristocracy of their right of robbing their tenants, and to abolish that alien Church which was the symbol of the humiliation of the Catholic people, there was no possible way that Mr. Disraeli could reconcile with the speech of 1844 his present hostility to all those remedial measures. He endeavoured accordingly to get out of

* See *ante*, 254-5.

the matter by some irrelevant jokes, and some mystifying language, that, so far as they suggested anything at all, suggested what was palpably false. He declared that when he made the speech from which quotations had been made, it appeared to him that nobody would listen to it. "It seemed to me," said Mr. Disraeli, "that I was pouring water upon sand, but it seems now that the water came from a golden goblet." *

I do not want to deny the skill and the grace with which Mr. Disraeli meets the charge, but I need scarcely point out to the reader that he utterly evades the real point at issue. The question was not of the largeness or the smallness of the audience by which Mr. Disraeli's words were heard, nor whether his words were met with approval or derision by those to whom they were addressed. The question was, Did he use the words? Did they represent his real opinions? And if they did, how could he reconcile his expression of diametrically opposite principles at a subsequent period? Mr. Disraeli might, indeed, have shown himself consistent in one way, but that was a way it would not have been quite convenient for him to adopt. He could have said that when he made the speech in 1844 he had—as I think I have proved—lost all hope of gratifying his ambitious longings in the Conservative party of which Peel was the chief, and, therefore, had thought it was high time for him to try his chance with the opposite side by preaching Liberal doctrines

* Hansard, 3 S. cxc. 1791.

and praising Russell, the Liberal leader. At the present moment the position was different. He had stayed with the Tory party, had prospered, was now its chief, and accordingly, as it was his interest, or appeared to be his interest, in 1844 to preach Liberal, so now it was his interest to preach Conservative doctrines on the Irish question. Thus he was perfectly consistent. It was his interest to preach one thing in 1844, and he preached it; it was his interest to preach the opposite doctrines in 1868, and he preached them. In this form of consistency Lord Beaconsfield is one of the most consistent statesmen that ever lived.

But I have not quite done with this passage. Mr. Disraeli went on to say that if he wanted to vindicate the words quoted against him, there were many remarks which he "might legitimately make." *

"I might remark, that speech was made before the change of locomotion, and the sale of a large portion of the soil of Ireland, which has established a resident proprietary instead of an absentee aristocracy:" † and then he declared that in his "conscience the sentiment of that speech was right. It may have been expressed with the heedless rhetoric which I suppose is the appanage of all who sit below the gangway; but in my historical conscience, the sentiment of that speech was right." ‡ Here Mr. Disraeli appears in the character of a manufacturer of a new kind of conscience. Such a novel production was certainly necessary if one were to understand what was the particular kind of

* *Ibid.* † *Ibid.* ‡ *Ibid.*

conscience of which Mr. Disraeli boasted the possession. A historical conscience must be taken to mean that a man can reconcile to such a conscience the preaching of opposite doctrines on the same state of circumstances. Lord Beaconsfield has given us quite enough of that form of conscience.

The counter-proposals of Mr. Disraeli through Lord Mayo died almost as soon as they were born, and on the 23rd of March Mr. Gladstone gave notice of his famous Resolutions on the Irish Church. Finding that defeat in the House of Commons was inevitable, Mr. Disraeli at once set to work to rouse the spirit of bigotry which lies latent in the English people whenever the Church of Rome is flaunted in their face. Writing to the Earl of Dartmouth, he declared that the crisis was not in Ireland. "In my opinion," said he, "the crisis of England is rather at hand;" * and in justification of this statement he said that there was a powerful party about to destroy "that sacred union between the Church and State which has hitherto been the chief means of our civilization, and is the only security for our religious liberty." † The Ministry met Mr. Gladstone's resolution by an amendment proposed by Lord Stanley (now Lord Derby), the effect of which was—not that the Irish Church should not be disestablished and disendowed, but—that any proposition tending to that result ought to be reserved for the decision of a new Parliament.‡ In other words, Mr. Disraeli was trying whether he could

* Irving, 670. † *Ibid.* ‡ *Ibid.* 671.

leave open to himself a means of escape by which he could in time adopt the principles he was now opposing. A result followed, very extraordinary in ordinary constitutional circumstances, but very familiar in times when Mr. Disraeli held a seat of power and authority. From the Treasury Bench opinions were delivered which were directly contradictory of each other. To judge from the speech of one Minister, the defence of the Irish Church was necessary to the temporal, if not the eternal welfare of the British people, and was a position from which the Conservative party could never recede; but while the House of Commons was still ringing with these words of lofty piety and heroic resolve, another Minister was standing up to hint that the Irish Church was not of so much importance after all, and that the Conservative party, if they were only left their good time, would deal with it quite as effectively as the best Liberals or wildest Radicals could desire.

But the game did not succeed. It was seen that the fight must be a real stand-up contest; and Mr. Disraeli, in spite of all his subterfuge and tricks, had to definitely take up his position as the advocate of a principle in which he did not believe, and the mouthpiece of a bigotry which he heartily despised.

Lord Cranborne (now Marquis of Salisbury) was one of the chief mediums of dragging Mr. Disraeli forth from the maze of equivoque and calculated contradiction in which he was endeavouring to hide himself. He denounced, in the bitterness of a sin-

cerity that had not yet fully submitted itself to the educating powers of Lord Beaconsfield, the double game the Premier was playing;* and Mr. Lowe, who was also a very keen critic of Mr. Disraeli, described

* "Therefore, while giving the right hon. Gentlemen credit for sincerity in the views they have expressed, I am utterly sceptical of their power to restrain their erratic Leader. And I am bound to say that the right hon. Gentleman will have language of his own which he can quote in support of whatever policy he may feel disposed to adopt; for it is part of the political skill of the right hon. Gentleman to be able to refer to phrases of his own in favour of any course he may deem it advisable to take. For instance, if it should suit him to take the Protestant line, here is the Dartmouth letter; should it suit him to take the opposite course, he can always refer to his speech of 1844, the spirit of which, as I heard him declare the other evening, is still right."—*Hansard*, 3 S. cxci. 536-7. Then, having referred to the tactics by which Mr. Disraeli had carried the Reform Bill in the previous session, Lord Cranborne proceeded: "Here, again, we have the same phenomenon—an opinion steadily maintained by the Conservative when out of office is changed when in office for the same plea for delay, and the same admission that considerable modification is required. What will be the result? If we are to judge by what has happened before, the result will be that those Gentlemen from the north of Ireland who are especially anxious for the maintenance of the Established Church in Ireland exactly as it is, will find themselves much as we who were in favour of restricted borough suffrage were last year—they will probably find themselves voting very humbly next year, in the wake of the right hon. Gentleman, for the total disestablishment and disendowment of the Irish Church. . . . I cannot help feeling that this is one of the Motions which, to use the expressive words of the hon. Member for Nottingham (Mr. Osborne), are constructed on the principle of 'cross-fishing'—that the motion is one which is intended to fish on both sides of the House. It whispers to the Gentlemen from the north of Ireland, 'Vote for me; I am the champion of the Protestant Church. I am seeking for delay in order to secure your interests.' It whispers to other hon. Gentlemen, 'Vote for me; I am educating my party, and the moment that the process is complete all your wishes shall be fulfilled.' . . . I do not pretend to predict the probable course of the right hon. Gentleman at the head of the Government. I should as soon undertake to tell you which way the weather-cock would point to-morrow."—*Ibid.* 538-9.

him as "the great Protestant champion whose experience of mankind had taught him to rely much on their gullibility." *

On March 30, the debate on Mr. Gladstone's Resolutions began; and on April 3, Mr. Disraeli made his reply. He answered the heavy indictment of Lord Cranborne (now Lord Salisbury) with his characteristic evasion of the real charge, and with personal sarcasm.† But the conclusion of this harangue was the part which excited most attention. Taking up the words of his letter to Lord Dartmouth, Mr. Disraeli sounded still louder the horrid cry of "No Popery." He announced the wondrous discovery that "the High Church Ritualists of England and the Irish followers

* *Ibid.* 738.

† "Perhaps I ought to notice the remarks which were made by the noble Lord the Member for Stamford. The noble Lord saw in this amendment, of which I have given the House the plain history—I say the plain and true history—the noble Lord saw in the language of the amendment, great cause for mistrust and want of confidence. He saw immediately that we were about to betray the trust with which he deems us to be invested. The noble Lord is at no time wanting in imputing to us being influenced by not the most amiable motives that can regulate the conduct of public men. I do not quarrel with the invective of the noble Lord. The noble Lord is a man of great talent, and he has vigour in his language. There is great vigour in his invective, and no want of vindictiveness. I admit that now speaking as a critic, and perhaps not an impartial one, I must say I think it wants finish. Considering that the noble Lord has studied his subject, and that he has written anonymous articles against me before and since I was his colleague—I do not know whether he wrote them when I was his colleague—I think it might have been accomplished more *ad unguem*. There is one thing the noble Lord never pardons, and that is the passing of the Reform Act last year. . . . Sir, the only objection which I have to these attacks of the noble Lord is that they invariably produce an echo from the other side. That, it seems to me,

of the Pope had been long in secret combination, and are now in open confederacy."*

When the House laughed at this wild attempt at playing the part of the champion of the faith, Mr. Disraeli, as was his wont, went on to repeat the assertions, in which he himself did not believe, with louder emphasis of his belief than before. "Yes," he said, "but it is a fact. It is confessed by those who attempted to prevent this combination, to mitigate the occurrence, to avoid the conjuncture which we always felt would be most dangerous to the country. . . . I am perfectly aware of the great difficulties that we have to encounter. I know the almost superhuman power of this combination. They have their hand almost upon the realm of England. Under the guise of Liberalism, under the pretence of legislating in the spirit of the age, they are, as they think, about to seize upon the supreme authority of the realm. But this I can say, that so long as, by the favour of the Queen, I stand here, I will oppose to the utmost of my ability the attempt they are making."†

is now almost a Parliamentary law. When the bark is heard from this side, the right hon. Member for Calne (Mr. Lowe) emerges, I will not say from his cave, but, perhaps, from a more cynical habitation. He joins immediately in the chorus of reciprocal malignity—

'And hails with horrid melody the moon.'"

—*Ibid.* 900-901. Immediately after making this onslaught, Mr. Disraeli declared that he was only acting thus in self-defence. "I have never attacked any one in my life"—at which there were loud cries of "Oh!" and "Peel!"—"unless," Mr. Disraeli went on, "I was first assailed"!—*Ibid.* 901-902. The reader knows how true this assertion is.

* *Ibid.* 924. † *Ibid.* 923.

After this splendid outburst, according to which, Mr. Gladstone, and those who voted for the abolition of the Irish Church, meant to dethrone the Queen, or something horrible of that kind, it is not surprising to find Mr. Disraeli declaring that the policy of the right hon. Gentleman would "change the character of this country." "It will deprive the subjects of Her Majesty of some of their most precious privileges, and it will dangerously touch the tenure of the Crown." *

I will not repeat the disagreeable commentaries of the time as to the mental condition of Mr. Disraeli when he uttered these prophecies of darkest gloom. I will only point out this—that not a single one of the consequences, or anything like what he predicted from the abolition of the Irish Church, has occurred; that the High Church Ritualists and the Roman Catholics are as far as ever from forming a secret combination or an open confederacy against the Crown; that none of the most precious privileges of the subjects of Her Majesty have been taken away from Her Majesty's subjects; that "if the tenure of the Crown" be dangerously touched in those days, it is not because of the abolition of the Irish Church, but because of the fantastic tricks Lord Beaconsfield himself has played with the Crown. I have given, in the speech just quoted, the first instance of that use of the name of the Sovereign to which in these days we have become habituated; but there are several worse instances than the one I have just dealt with. During this great conflict, on which on one

* *Ibid.*

side were religious tolerance and the rights of conscience, and on the other dark bigotry and the spirit of religious persecution, Mr. Disraeli on every possible occasion put forward the Queen as fighting in the ranks of the enemies of justice and religious equality. Never has there been a Minister who, while professing, I may almost say, slavish admiration of the throne, has done more to bring that power into disrepute, disrespect, and danger.

On the night of the speech of Mr. Disraeli which I have last noticed, the House, by a majority of 60, decided to enter into a Committee on Mr. Gladstone's Resolutions.

A few days afterwards, Mr. Disraeli made another attempt to raise the "No Popery" cry. The Rev. Mr. Baker, the vicar of Addington, having written to him, to ask an explanation of his extraordinary attack upon the High Church party, Mr. Disraeli replied in a letter which, not satisfied with the language of an ordinary layman, he dated, after the manner of High Church clerics, Maunday Thursday. In this epistle he repeated the statement that the "extreme faction" in the English Church had been for some time in secret combination, and was now in open confederacy with the Church of Rome. "As I hold," continued the writer, "that the dissolution of the union between Church and State will cause permanently a greater revolution in this country than foreign conquest, I shall use my utmost energies to defeat these fatal machinations."* The words of this

* Irving, 673.

letter themselves carry with them the stamp of their insincerity. I have often already remarked that Lord Beaconsfield, in common with persons of his character, destroys his part by over-acting it. Be it remarked, too, that this man, who was thus endeavouring to stir up in this country a cry against what he calls Irish Romanists, was at that very moment, or a few moments before, in negotiation with these same Irish Romanists for giving them a charter for their university. And be it remembered, too, that this man, who was professing to consider the disruption of the union between Church and State as a calamity of such terrible consequence, and who was speaking of the Anglican communion with an unctuous piety that would have done credit to a Bishop, is really in no sense a Christian at all. I have examined, in discussing his arguments in favour of the emancipation of the Jews, the picture which he gave of the relations between the Jewish faith and the Christian religion, and I have shown that his view of the Christian faith proves that he has no conception even of its very basis. What are we to think of a man who thus uses religion as the tool of his ambition? If there be a subject which ought to be safe from the intrigues and the meanness of politics, it is the subject of religion. If there be a feeling in the human heart which even an unscrupulous man might be expected to refrain from playing upon, it is the feeling of religion. It marks a very advanced stage indeed of insincerity and of heartlessness to drag men's altars and men's God into the

mire of one's own mean interests. But what cared Mr. Disraeli? He had only his part to play of a clever foreigner trifling with the interests and playing upon the passions of the people to whose race he was proud not to belong, and in whose creed he scorned to believe.

On April 30, the discussion on Mr. Gladstone's first resolution came to an end. I need not take any notice of Mr. Disraeli's speech further than to say that he again resorted to the device of representing the attack on the Irish Church as an attack on the prerogatives of the Crown.* Mr. Gladstone's resolution was carried by a majority of 65 votes—330 to 265; and Mr. Disraeli immediately moved the adjournment of the House, so as to give the Ministers time to consider their position.

On May 4, Mr. Disraeli announced the intentions of the Government, and very curious intentions they were. He declared, in the first place, that they had resolved to dissolve Parliament.† As was pointed out immediately afterwards by Mr. Gladstone, it was quite unprecedented in the history of this country that a Government defeated by two such majorities as 60 and 65 should resort to a dissolution.‡ But that was not all: he next informed the House that this dissolution was not to take place immediately; that they were to wait until the new Reform Act came into operation, which would be in the following November; and that the House should give to the Government,

* Hansard, cxci. 1673.
† *Ibid.* 1705. ‡ *Ibid.* 1711.

during this interval, "their cordial co-operation."* In other words, the Ministry which had been defeated by overwhelming majorities, and which had thus lost in the completest manner the confidence of the House, was, with the cordial co-operation of the House of Commons, to exercise all the power and influence of the Government for six months longer. But this was not the most extraordinary part of this explanation. In detailing his interviews with the Queen, Mr. Disraeli managed to convey the impression that his remaining in office was not so much his own desire as the desire of Her Majesty herself. He put it that he had given Her Majesty two alternatives—either that she should accept his resignation or a dissolution of Parliament; and that Her Majesty, after the consideration of a day, chose the alternative of retaining the services of Mr. Disraeli.† And he went on also to make Her Majesty responsible for deferring the appeal to the constituencies for the period of six months, until the new Reform Act came into operation.‡ This was an entirely novel position for a Ministry to assume.§ As

* *Ibid.* 1706.

† *Ibid.* 1705-6.

‡ *Ibid.* 1706.

§ That I may not be supposed to misrepresent Mr. Disraeli, I give his own words: "After that vote, I lost no time in soliciting Her Majesty to be graciously pleased to grant me an audience, and, with that promptitude which Her Majesty always displays when the public interest is at stake, she granted that audience immediately, so that I had the advantage of being in audience of Her Majesty on the afternoon of the very day on which the vote was taken. On that occasion I placed—I am sure fairly and completely—before Her Majesty the position of the Government and the position of parties, and the

Mr. Ayrton very neatly put it, Mr. Disraeli wished to appear "a suffering Minister who was holding office by the wish of the Queen for the benefit of the people. A Minister in that position," went on the then member for

position of the country with respect to them; and I told Her Majesty, with Her permission, that, under the circumstances—with which from my previous narrative the House is perfectly acquainted—the advice which Her Majesty's Ministers would, in the full spirit of the constitution, offer to Her Majesty would be that Her Majesty should dissolve this Parliament, and take the opinion of the country as to the conduct of Her Ministers and the question of the Irish Church. But at the same time, with the full concurrence of my Colleagues, I represented to Her Majesty that there were important occasions on which it was wise that the Sovereign should not be embarrassed by personal claims, however constitutional, valid, or meritorious; and that if Her Majesty were of opinion that the question at issue could be more satisfactorily settled, or the just interests of the country more studied, by the immediate retirement of the present Government from Office, we were prepared to quit Her Majesty's service immediately, with no other feeling but that which every Minister who has served the Queen must possess—namely, of gratitude to Her Majesty for the warm constitutional support which She always gives to her Ministers, and I may add—as it is a truth which cannot be concealed—for the aid and assistance which every Minister receives from a Sovereign who now has had such vast experience of public affairs. In fact, Sir, I tendered my resignation to the Queen. Her Majesty commanded me to attend Her in audience on the next day, when Her Majesty was pleased to express Her pleasure not to accept the resignation of Her Ministry, and Her readiness to dissolve this Parliament so soon as the state of public business would permit. Under these circumstances, I advised Her Majesty that, although the present constituency was no doubt as morally competent to decide upon the question of the disestablishment of the Church as the representatives of the constituency of this House, still it was the opinion of Her Majesty's Ministers that every effort should be made with a view to that appeal, if possible, being directed to the new constituency which the wisdom of Parliament created last year; and I expressed to Her Majesty that, if we had the cordial co-operation of Parliament, I was advised by those who were experienced and skilful in these matters that it would be possible to make arrangements by which the dissolution would take place in the autumn of this year."—*Hansard*, 3 S. cxci. 1705-6.

the Tower Hamlets, "carried with him an enormous amount of sympathy, and throughout the whole country such a suffering Minister must receive an assistance and support which would not be accorded to a Minister who held office on his own advice and responsibility against the twice-repeated judgments of the House of Commons." * Several other speakers called attention, in a like manner, to Mr. Disraeli's unconstitutional dissolution, and scandalous introduction of the Queen's name.

The subject was again brought before the House on the following day by Mr. Gladstone, and it had, in the meantime, been further complicated by a statement of the Duke of Richmond's in the House of Lords, which gave a different interpretation of the interviews between the Prime Minister and the Queen, and which represented Her Majesty still further in the character of an advocate of the Ministry against the Opposition. Mr. Gladstone put the case against Mr. Disraeli very well by saying that "for the first time, I believe, in recent history, certainly within the recollection of the present generation, or, as far as I know, within any other recollection, the Minister seemed to make Her Majesty the suggester of the course which was about to be pursued by the Government, instead of the accepter or rejecter of the simple and single advice tendered by them to her, as has been the case on every former occasion." † The debate did not advance the matter much further, for nothing could be got from Mr. Disraeli but evasive

* *Ibid.* 1724-5. † *Ibid.* 1788.

replies, in which he spoke, in a manner I will not characterise, of his interviews with the Queen. The general impression, however, which he left remained the same—that the Queen had two alternatives—that of accepting the resignation of Mr. Disraeli, or that of agreeing to a dissolution, and that of these two alternatives she chose Mr. Disraeli's remaining in office. A few days afterwards the Prime Minister received just punishment for thus placing the Queen on the side of one of the political parties of the country, and that the party which was fighting under the banner of religious intolerance. Mr. Bright, referring to Mr. Disraeli's accounts of his interviews with the Queen, declared them to have been "a mixture of pompousness and sometimes of servility," and denounced in scathing terms the injury to the country, and the greater injury to the Crown, by representing the Queen in the character of an enemy to the cause of religious freedom. Mr. Disraeli made a weak reply to this just attack, without disproving any of Mr. Bright's charges.*

* I give a few extracts from Mr. Bright's speech. "I have not been endeavouring to climb the ladder of Parliamentary promotion and notoriety. ('Oh!') No, Sir, I have only had the single object—so far as I have had anything to do with Irish questions—to promote what appeared to be just to that country, and which would tend to the advantage of the United Kingdom. The right hon. Gentleman the other night, with a mixture of pompousness and sometimes of servility, talked at large of the interviews which he had with his Sovereign. I venture to say that a Minister who deceives his Sovereign is as guilty as the conspirator who would dethrone her. ('Oh!') I do not charge the right hon. Gentleman with deceiving his Sovereign; but if he had not changed the opinion which he held twenty-five years ago, and which he has said in the main was right then I fear that he has not stated all that it was his duty to state in

It is not necessary for me to more than allude in a word or two to what took place during the remainder of this session. Mr. Gladstone carried, it is known, his Resolutions and his Suspensory Bill. The Government were besides defeated over and over again on their Irish and Scotch Reform Bills; but Mr. Disraeli was not

the interviews which he had with his Sovereign. Let me tell hon. Gentlemen opposite, and the right hon. Gentleman in particular, that any man in this country who puts the Sovereign in the front of a great struggle like this into which it may be we are about to enter—who points to the Irish people, and says from the floor of this House—'Your Queen holds the flag under which we, the enemies of religious equality and justice to Ireland, are marshalled,'—I say that the Minister who does that is guilty of a very high crime and a great misdemeanour against his Sovereign and against his country. And there is no honour, and there is no reputation, there is no glory, there is no future name that any Minister can gain by conduct like this that will acquit him to posterity of one of the most grievous offences against his country which a Prime Minister can possibly commit."—*Hansard*, 3 S. cxci. 1942-3. The reply of Mr. Disraeli was as follows: "Sir, I shall not condescend to notice at length the observations of the hon. Member for Birmingham. He says that when it was my duty to make a communication to the House, of the greatest importance, and which I certainly wished to make—as I hoped I did make it—in a manner not unbecoming the occasion—I was at once 'pompous and servile.' Well, Sir, if it suits the heat of party acrimony to impute such qualities to me, any Gentleman may do so; but I am in the memory and in the feeling of hon. Gentlemen on both sides of the House—and fortunately there are Gentlemen on both sides of this House—they will judge of the accuracy of this representation of my conduct. It is to their feeling and to their sentiment on both sides of the House that I must appeal; and no words of mine, if the charge be true, can vindicate me. The hon. Gentleman says that he will make no charge against me—and then he makes insinuations which, if he believes, he ought to bring forth boldly as charges. I defy the hon. Member for Birmingham, notwithstanding his stale invective, to come down to this House and substantiate any charge of the kind which he has presumed only to insinuate. Let him prefer those charges; I will meet him; and I will appeal to the verdict only of Gentlemen who sit on the same side of the House as himself."—*Ibid.* 1947.

to be moved from his place. At last Parliament was dissolved, and then began that tempestuous agitation on the Irish Church which is not yet forgotten. On October 2, Mr. Disraeli issued an address to his constituents, in which all the terrible consequences which would follow from the abolition of the Irish Church were recapitulated. Once more the attempt was made to play on the bigotry of the country; and the hated figures of the Pope and the Church of Rome were dangled before the English constituencies in the hope that the demon of bigotry might be evoked in aid of Mr. Disraeli and his Government. Those fell efforts fortunately failed; and when the verdict of the constituencies was taken, it was so overwhelming against Mr. Disraeli that he resigned office without waiting for the meeting of Parliament.

I need not more than refer in a sentence to Mr. Disraeli's action during the Ministry of Mr. Gladstone. Suffice it to say, that to all the measures of reform which that Ministry introduced, and which entitle it to the credit of being the most beneficent Ministry ever known in our history, Mr. Disraeli was opposed. His most important speech during this period was delivered outside Parliament, at a demonstration in his honour in Manchester, in the course of which he employed against the Ministers one of the happiest illustrations in all his speeches, and laid down *Sanitas sanitatum et omnia sanitas* as the motto of the Conservative party.

* Mr. Disraeli was describing the difference in the Gladstone Ministry between their earlier and their later years of existence. "B[illegible]

A more interesting event in the life of Mr. Disraeli

Gentlemen," he said, "as time progressed it was not difficult to perceive that extravagance was being substituted for energy by the Government. The unnatural stimulus was subsiding; their paroxysm ended in prostration. Some took refuge in melancholy, and their eminent chief alternated between a menace and a sigh. As I sit opposite the Treasury Bench, the Ministers remind me of one of those marine landscapes not unusual on the coast of South America: you behold a range of exhausted volcanoes; not a flame flickers on a single pallid crest; but the situation is still dangerous—there are occasional earthquakes, and ever and anon the dark rumbling of the sea."—Speech of the Right Hon. B. Disraeli at the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, April 2, 1872. By Authority.

The phrase "exhausted volcanoes" has a suspicious resemblance to "extinct volcanoes," a phrase employed in Hope's "Anastasius." The writer is describing the change in the appearance of the fortress in Rhodes. "Its wide ramparts," he says, "its lofty bulwarks, its crested batteries of a black and rugged stone, deprived as they now were of the once thundering engines of fire and destruction, looked like the *silenced crater of an extinct volcano*, still frowning upon the fertile plain below, though its devastating powers are no longer feared."—Fourth edition, i. 273. The resemblance between the two passages is not very close, except in the single phrase alluded to. "Anastasius" is a work with which Lord Beaconsfield was very well familiar. He tells us himself that DEEPDENE, the seat of Mr. Henry Hope, the eldest son of the author of "Anastasius" (Mr. Thomas Hope), was the rendezvous of the Young England party (General Preface, xii.); and to Mr. Henry Hope "Coningsby" is dedicated. Let me make the passing remark on this dedication, that Lord Beaconsfield states that one of his objects in writing "Coningsby" was "to scatter some suggestions that may tend to elevate the tone of public life." This is cool in the man who has degraded the public life of England more than any English statesman who ever lived. To return to "Anastasius," "Tancred" bears traces here and there of the influence of Hope's work. But I cannot find any passage in the work of Lord Beaconsfield in which there is a resemblance in words as well as in ideas to "Anastasius." In the next and following pages, however, I shall prove charges of plagiarism against Lord Beaconsfield of a very serious character. Though "Tancred" is one of Lord Beaconsfield's happiest efforts, and though in parts it is fine, yet its distance from really high art will be brought home to the mind by reading it immediately after "Anastasius." Both are Eastern tales: but the one is a work of genius; the other the unequal production of a but half-skilled workman.

in this interval was his resumption, after more than twenty years, of the novelist's pen. In May, 1870, he produced "Lothair." The novel bears the closest resemblance to the productions of his earlier days; as in them, passages of splendid diction alternate with passages of the most vapid inanity; and the book—strange to say—is characterised, too, by its admiring descriptions of the nobility—their mansions and their luxurious surroundings,—a form of mean adulation of which one would think Mr. Disraeli's attainment of one of the highest positions in England might have cured him. There are some clever sketches of contemporary characters; there are here and there bright epigrams; but the book is dreary and prolix, and the bright passages are the exception,—the dull the rule. So far as the book could be said to have any purpose at all, it was a strong attack upon the Roman Catholic Church.*

* An article in the *Dublin Review* points out a very singular resemblance between Mr. Disraeli's novel and one of Miss Amelia B. Edwards', entitled "Half a Million of Money."—See *Dublin Review*, xv., 1870. I will select this place for giving some even graver instances of Lord Beaconsfield's appropriation of other people's literary goods. In the first edition of "Venetia," Mr. Disraeli, in speaking of Byron under the name of Cadurcis, "conveyed" a whole passage from Macaulay's Essay in the *Edinburgh Review* on Byron. It was the well-known piece of satire on England's periodic fits of persecuting Puritanism. The Essay had not been republished then, for Macaulay had not yet reached his position of fame. The plagiarism, however, was noticed, and pointed out. Lord Beaconsfield got over the exposure by tacking on, in a subsequent edition, "These observations of a well-known writer apply to the case of Lord Cadurcis."—*Jeaffreson*, "Novels and Novelists," ii. 243. The passage will be found in chap. xviii. p. 320, in Book IV. of the last (1878) edition. I have another instance of plagiarism, however, which

In January, 1874, Mr. Gladstone dissolved Parliament and appealed to the country, and the result, as

is worse, and which can only be paralleled by the case in which Lord Beaconsfield passed off a whole passage of a French Review as his own. One of the finest, perhaps the finest, passage in all his speeches, is the peroration of his speech on the Corn Law Bill (May 15, 1846). I shall put that passage side by side with one from a work of the late Mr. Urquhart:—

Lord Beaconsfield.	Mr. Urquhart.
"I know, Sir, that all confidence in public men is lost. But, Sir, I have faith in the primitive and enduring elements of the English character. It may be vain now, in the midnight of their intoxication, to tell them that there will be an awakening of bitterness; it may be idle now, in the spring-tide of their economic frenzy, to warn them that there may be an ebb of trouble. But the dark and inevitable hour will arrive. Then, when their spirit is softened by misfortune, they will recur to those principles that made England great, and which, in our belief, can alone keep England great. Then, too, perchance they may remember, not with unkindness, those who, betrayed and deserted, were neither ashamed nor afraid to struggle for the 'good old cause'—the cause with which are associated principles the most popular, sentiments the most entirely national—the cause of labour—the cause of the people—the cause of England."—*Hansard*, 3 S. lxxxvi 677.	"It is in this midnight of your intoxication, that I declare to you an awakening of bitterness,—it is at this spring-tide of your joy, that I tell you that an ebb of troubles is at hand. A voice of warning and of sorrow I raise, although it be alone; and if its sounds cannot disturb your slumber, and if its sense cannot pierce your breasts, its tone will be preserved, and will sink upon your spirits when they are softened by misfortune."—*Diplomatic Transactions in Central Asia.* London, 1841; p. 239.

Mr. Disraeli had the coolness to introduce Mr. Goldwin Smith in 'Lothair" under a fictitious name, and accuse him with obsequious-

everybody knows, was that Mr. Disraeli was returned to office by a large majority.

ness towards the nobility, a charge which all who have the honour of Mr. Smith's acquaintance knew to be ludicrously wide of fact. Mr. Smith replied in a letter in which he characterised this attack in terms of just severity.

CHAPTER XV

DICTATOR.

Mr. Disraeli was now in a position entirely different from any he had previously occupied. Up to this, when he had held office he was the Minister of a minority, and he was able to carry out nothing but the wishes of his opponents. Now he was in a position of power, with an overwhelming majority, and he was left almost perfectly free play for the development of his own ideas and character. I shall pass over with just a glance or two the first years of his Premiership, because they had reference almost entirely to domestic concerns, and pass on as quickly as I can to the later years, which were principally concerned with foreign policy. His conduct on one domestic question is the only one that requires any particular comment. In 1874, Mr. Russell Gurney brought in a Bill which afterwards became law as the Public Worship Act. The object of this Bill, as is well known, was to repress what were considered the excesses of one of the parties in the English Church. The Bill met with the opposition of

several able men in both Houses, apart altogether from considerations of party. However, it was a Bill for which there was at the moment a public outcry; and when its fate might still be said to some extent to hang in the balance, Mr. Disraeli intervened and made a vehement speech in favour of its proposals. "I take," said he, speaking of the purposes of the measure, "the primary object of this Bill, whose powers, if it be enacted, will be applied and extended impartially to all subjects of Her Majesty, to be this, —to put down Ritualism."* And the result of this interference on the part of Mr. Disraeli was that the Bill was quickly passed through both Houses, and became law. Indeed, so violent was his advocacy of this measure that he went so far as to deliver an invective on one of his most important colleagues. He described the Marquis of Salisbury, who had opposed the measure, as "a master of flouts and gibes and sneers;"* and it is generally understood that but for some explanations on both sides this speech would have led to the resignation of that Minister. The reader has not, I hope, forgotten the contributions which Mr. Disraeli gave to the literature of Young England. If there be one thing more than another distinctly laid down in those contributions, it is a strong preference for that school in the English Church which has developed into Ritualism. I have quoted several passages in which some of the most characteristic practices of the Roman Catholic Church are

* Hansard, 3 S. ccxxi. 78. * *Ibid.*

spoken of with a strong suggestion of the desirability of imitating them. I have quoted other passages in which an elaborate ritual is distinctly laid down as one of the greatest aids to devotion. In other words, I think I have shown clearly that the Young England party, of which Mr. Disraeli was the leader, if not the founder, was a party which in religion was in its days called Tractarian, and in ours would be, at least, partially represented by what are called Ritualists. Another thing worthy of attention is that in the speeches of Lord Beaconsfield's early manhood, there is constant denunciation of the Erastian system—of the interference of the State in the affairs of the Church. Yet this is the man who strongly supports a bill which introduces the interference of the State in the affairs of the English Church to a degree never before paralleled; and this is the man who supports a bill, the object of which, in his own words, is "to put down Ritualism."

We all know what the effects of that measure have been. A state of distraction and of incessant quarrel has been introduced into the English Church which is unprecedented in its history. These quarrels have been fought out in public law courts at great expense, with hot passion; and where there was before at worst an armed neutrality, there is now an internecine war. I say nothing as to the question whether the Church Establishment is or is not a good institution; but this I do say, that there is no man of sense who does not believe that, if it be ultimately disestablished, one of

the causes will be the Public Worship Act which Mr. Disraeli insisted on having passed. I do not suppose that the prospect of such a result would much disturb Lord Beaconsfield's peace of mind. Whatever the result of the bill, his conduct in the matter is inexcusable. He preached Ritualism at one time when Ritualism served his ends, and he preached the putting down of Ritualism when the putting down of Ritualism suited his purposes. In both the one case and the other he employed the sacred name of religion and men's spiritual instincts for the purpose of gratifying his own desires. I pass, without further comment on his home action during these years, to the consideration of his conduct on the Eastern question.*

* It is worth while, perhaps, devoting just an allusion or two in a note to an occurrence in Lord Beaconsfield's Premiership which bears a strong family resemblance to some of the other acts in his career to which I have called attention. In the course of the session of 1877 (July 16), Mr. J. Holms, the member for Hackney, drew attention to the appointment of Mr. T. D. Pigott to the office of Comptroller of the Stationery Department. Mr. Holms showed that this was one of the many departments which had been investigated by a special committee appointed in 1873 "to inquire into and report upon the existing principles and practice which in the several public departments and bodies regulate the purchase and sale of materials and stores." The Committee had discovered that this department had been very much mismanaged. It had been taken in hand by the Treasury from the year 1874, and the amount of waste on it in previous years will be judged from the fact that in the year 1876 there was a saving on certain items of the vote of £495,000 of a sum of £45,000, or nearly 9 per cent.—(speech of Mr. John Holms, *Hansard*, 3 S. ccxxxv. 1330); and according to the information of Mr. Holms an additional saving of £25,000 was anticipated on other votes in the following year, making altogether a saving of £70,000; all this being in the work done for the Home Department alone.—*Ibid.* The Select Committee, not unnaturally, in the face of such facts, recommended that the head of the department should be a person practically as well acquainted with the trade as if he were a stationer.—*Ibid.* 1332. It should

Before dealing with the policy which Lord Beaconsfield pursued on this great question, it will perhaps be instructive to consider the dispositions with which

also be mentioned that up to this time the appointment to this office had been considered a reward for literary services to a political party. For instance, Sir Robert Peel appointed to the office the well-known Conservative *littérateur*, Mr. J. R. M'Culloch; and his successor, Mr. W. R. Greg, was also distinguished for the services his pen had rendered to political literature. On the resignation of Mr. Greg, Lord Beaconsfield had the disposal of the office, and the gentleman on whom he conferred it was Mr. T. D. Pigott. It was not easy to discover any public reasons for such a choice. Mr. Pigott was not a distinguished literary man, and as a civil servant "he was one of a hundred and one junior clerks in the War Office, being 69th upon the list.—*Ibid.* 1332. What made the matter worse was that the next officer in rank to Mr. Greg—a Mr. Reid—was generally regarded as a very efficient civil servant, and, if I be not mistaken, well qualified for the post. Mr. Holms very properly brought this strange transaction before the House of Commons, suggesting that the Premier's only reason for thus raising this young man to such a good post in the face of the recent recommendations of the Select Committee, and of the strong grounds by which these recommendations were backed up, was that Mr. Pigott was the son of the late rector of Hughenden, who, he believed, with his family, had rendered valuable assistance to the Premier (*Ibid.* 1333). So strong did the case appear that even in the present House of Commons a vote of censure on Lord Beaconsfield was carried by a majority of four votes—156 to 152. Lord Beaconsfield made a set speech in reply to this speech; and, indeed, actually took the trouble of announcing his purpose beforehand, so that he had the gratification of having a large audience. The address had an enormous success. According to the *Times* (July 20, 1877), the speech "showed" that Lord Beaconsfield's "powers of defence" were "not impaired." "The defence, we hasten to say," wrote the *Daily News* (same date), "was complete." Let me very briefly discuss how far those eulogisms were deserved. The Premier met the recommendation of the Committee that the Comptroller should be a person acquainted with the stationery trade by the remark that if he had to follow such a recommendation—"to appoint a stationer or a printer,"—"I should have had to appoint some person who had retired from business, or some person from whom business had retired."—*Ibid.* 1480 (?). Of course the House laughed; it is not hard, however, to show—if it be necessary to deal seriously with such trifling—

he would approach its consideration. One of the most remarkable phenomena in the course of the war between Russia and Turkey was the extraordinary

that this answer is no answer at all. One need not be a stationer on one's own account to know all about stationery ; a clerk in a stationer's shop on 30*s.* a week may know the business quite as well as the master stationer himself. How few managers of stationers' establishments in London would not have been delighted to get Mr. Pigott's place ? Lord Beaconsfield is too great a man, of course, to know anything of the feelings with which ordinary beings regard £800 a year ; accordingly he speaks of that income as something beneath contempt. Other people — who have not the Premier's lofty notions—know that a permanent salary of £800 under Government, and with a pension, would secure the highest ability in the ranks of clerks. Let us pass on to the more personal and interesting part of Lord Beaconsfield's narrative. Answering the suggestion of Mr. Holms that the appointment was due to his acquaintance with Mr. Pigott and his father, Lord Beaconsfield declared that he had no personal acquaintance with Mr. Pigott. "I do not know him," said the Premier, "even by sight," (*Ibid.* 1486) ; and as to his father, the answer was still more triumphant. "Thirty years ago," said Lord Beaconsfield, "there was a vicar in my parish of the name of Pigott, and he certainly was the father to Mr. Digby Pigott. . . . . Shortly after I succeeded to that property Mr. Pigott gave up his living, and retired to a distant county. I have never had any relations with him. With regard to our intimate friendship and his electioneering assistance, all I know of his interference in county elections is, that before he departed from the county of Buckingham he *registered a vote against me.*"—*Ibid.* 1485. The assertion with regard to young Mr. Pigott may be correct ; as may also another statement Lord Beaconsfield made with regard to him, that he owed the place, not to Lord Beaconsfield's own motion, but to the recommendation of "a gentleman who has as large an experience of public business in our public offices as probably any living person."—*Ibid.* 1485. It is rather remarkable, however, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer—though doubtless he has not "as large an experience of public business in our public offices" as the mysterious person whom Lord Beaconsfield dangles before our awed imaginations —taking care not to mention his name ;—it is rather remarkable, I say, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer spoke of Lord Beaconsfield as "having watched his," Mr. Pigott's, "career with some interest on account of his connexion with a former vicar of Hughenden."—*Ibid.* 1339. Sir Stafford Northcote, however, may have misunderstood his chief ; and

unanimity with which the Jews of every part of the world took the side of the Sultan against the Czar. People living within the same frontiers, speaking the same language, professing the same creed, with exactly the same interests, have held the most opposite views upon this Russo-Turkish question. In this country—to take the most striking example—the people, agreed for the most part on the main question of religion, of the same race, with the same great interests to conserve, differed with a bitterness almost unexampled in their domestic or in their foreign controversies. But here are the Jews, dispersed over every part of the globe, speaking different tongues, divided in nearly every sympathy,—separated, in fact, by everything that can separate man, except the one

Lord Beaconsfield's account may be correct with respect to Mr. Pigott junior. But there is no such escape for him with respect to Mr. Pigott senior. He declares that that gentleman voted against him. The only elections for Bucks at which Lord Beaconsfield was opposed were in 1852 and 1874. At the latter contest, Mr. Pigott could not vote either for or against Mr. Disraeli, for he *was dead;* he died on December 10, 1852 (*Gentleman's Magazine*, N.S., xxxix. 327); in the former contest he did not vote at all. (I state this on the authority of an extract from the polling-book, with which Mr. Holms has supplied me.) Indeed it would have been hard for Mr. Pigott to have voted against Lord Beaconsfield at the time, seeing that he had been before the occurrence of the election appointed to the living of Ashwellthorpe with Wreningham, in Norfolk. ("Clergy List for 1852," 211.) And Lord Beaconsfield, as the patron of the living of Hughenden, had appointed Mr. C. W. Chubbe as Mr. Pigott's successor the year before the election took place.—*Ibid.* 101 Accordingly he had the best reason for knowing the facts. I have shown, therefore, that Mr. Pigott, who according to Lord Beaconsfield had voted against him, had never voted for or against him; and that Lord Beaconsfield had most excellent reasons for knowing this. With this, and the other facts I have stated, the reader will judge how far Lord Beaconsfield deserved the encomiums his explanation received.

point of race,—all united in their feelings on this great contest!

It is not very hard to understand this preference. In the first place, the Turk gives ordinarily to his subjects a contemptuous toleration, while the Russian Government is known to be even still one of the most determined oppressors of the Jewish race. But this is not the only or perhaps even the deepest cause of this phenomenon. For many ages—more in the past than in the present, of course—there has been among large sections of the Jews the strongest sympathy with the Mohammedan peoples. A common enemy is a great bond of friendship, and as the Christian was equally the enemy of the Mohammedan and the Jew, they were thereby brought into a certain alliance with one another. This alliance has been most close on many occasions. In the time of the Crusaders, the Jews were the friends who aided the Mohammedans in keeping back the tide of Christian invasion which was floating against the East, and in Spain the Jews were the constant friends and allies of the Moorish against the Christian inhabitants of the country. The alliance must have been very close in the past indeed to have left such deep traces behind.

Now I think I shall be able to prove that Mr. Disraeli treated this whole question from the stand point of the Jew. I find in several of his works these feelings of kinsmanship between the Mussulman and the Jew distinctly laid down. In "Coningsby," Sidonia

—the representative Jew—insists on this affinity between the two races, and the community of their interests against those of the Christian, over and over again. And be it remarked that these passages were written so far back as 1842, when there can be little doubt that Mr. Disraeli was writing—so far as he could write anything—without any possibility of foreseeing the events of the last two years. They, therefore, may be taken as the expressions of his genuine feelings upon the question; and his general view then upon this question of Turkey is that as a Jew he is a kinsman of the Turk, and that, as a Jew, he feels bound to make common cause with the Turk against the Christian.*

* The passages in Lord Beaconsfield's works in which he expresses this strong feeling of the kinsmanship of the Jew and the Mohammedan, and their bond of hate against the Christian, are innumerable. I can here only give a few of the most prominent. Thus, in "Coningsby," he describes the Saracens of Spain as probably descendants of some of the lost tribes of Israel. "Whence," he writes, "came those Mosaic Arabs, whose passage across the Strait from Africa to Europe long preceded the invasion of the Mohammedan Arabs, it is now impossible to ascertain. Their traditions tell us that from time immemorial they had sojourned in Africa; and it is not improbable that they may have been the descendants of some of the earlier dispersions, like those Hebrew colonies that we find in China, and who probably emigrated from Persia in the days of the great monarchies."—(New edition, 209.) Then he proceeds to clearly trace how those descendants of a common stock were, in spite of their difference of creed, brought more closely together by the persecuting spirit of the Christians. "There is no doubt," writes Lord Beaconsfield, "the Council of Toledo led, as directly as the lust of Roderick, to the invasion of Spain by the Moslemin Arabs. The Jewish population, suffering under the most sanguinary and atrocious persecution, looked to their sympathising brethren of the Crescent, whose camps already gleamed on the opposite shore. The overthrow of the Gothic kingdom was as much achieved by the superior information which

And mark the magnificent prospect which unfolded itself before the eyes of Lord Beaconsfield in this controversy! Here he was—the ruler of a great Christian empire—to some extent the arbiter of the destinies of all the Christian countries of Europe! Would not the

the Saracens received from their suffering kinsmen, as by the resistless valour of the Desert. The Saracen kingdoms were established. That fair and unrivalled civilisation arose which preserved for Europe arts and letters when Christendom was plunged in darkness. The children of Ishmael rewarded the children of Israel with equal rights and privileges with themselves. During these halcyon centuries, it is difficult to distinguish the follower of Moses from the votary of Mahomet. Both alike built palaces, gardens, and fountains, filled equally the highest offices of the State, competed in an extensive and enlightened commerce, and rivalled each other in renowned universities."—*Ibid.* 209-10. This is followed by a passage in which the persecutions of the Inquisition are graphically described; and then comes the question—"Where is Spain? Its fall, its unparalleled and its irremediable fall, is mainly to be attributed to the expulsion of that large portion of its subjects, the most industrious and intelligent, who traced their origin to the Mosaic and Mohammedan Arabs" (212). In "Tancred" we have the same ideas reproduced: let a few quotations suffice. "'Then how do you know that Mahomet was not inspired?' said Fakredeen. 'Far be it from me to impugn the divine commission of any of the seed of Abraham,' replied Tancred; 'there are doctors of our Church who recognise the sacred office of Mahomet, though they hold it to be, what divine commissions, with the great exception, have ever been—limited and local.' 'God has never spoken to a European?' said Fakredeen, inquiringly. 'Never!'"—(New edition, 261.) And in another place occurs this passage: "On the top of Mount Sinai are two ruins—a Christian church and a Mohammedan mosque. In this, the sublimest scene of Arabian glory, Israel and Ishmael alike raised their altars to the great God of Abraham. Why are they in ruins?"—*Ibid.* 289. Those passages alone, I think, would suffice to show the truth of my argument, that the Eastern policy of Lord Beaconsfield was a Hebrew—or, to use what he himself considers the proper name for the two peoples, different in creeds but alike in race—was an Arab policy. People who will persist in thinking that it was an English policy can only be those who have not read Lord Beaconsfield's works, or who, having read, have not intelligence to interpret them.

shame of Israel be indeed blotted out, and its glory reach a sublimer height than it had ever touched even in its stupendous past, if in the nineteenth century of Christendom—this nineteenth century of Jewish persecution, Jewish degradation, Jewish humiliation by Christians, a single Jew could mould the whole policy of Christendom to Jewish aims,—could make it friendly to the friends and hostile to the foes of Judæa! And would not this magnificent triumph be the sublimer to the mind of Lord Beaconsfield if it could be carried out under the guise of serving the interest of the Christians themselves? I have said that the great ideal of Lord Beaconsfield's youth and manhood, the ideal he bodies forth in all his earlier and sincerer utterances, was that of triumphant imposture. To deceive mankind, to make them his game, to play upon their passions without feeling them, to trifle with their most sacred interests so as to advance his own—this was the sublime goal which he set for himself in his youth. And thus his position as English Premier in this Russo-Turkish war offered to him an opportunity for attaining a more sublime triumph for his sympathies and antipathies as a Jew, and his longings as a man, than had ever yet presented itself, even in his singularly prosperous and distinguished career.

But those were not the only reasons which inclined Lord Beaconsfield to take the side of the Turk. It is not in accordance with my view of his character to imagine that even his strongest and sincerest sympathies, or his most eager desires, would be allowed by

him to interfere with his interests. In this case, however, with that clearness of perception which I grant him in all things affecting himself—as he never thinks of anything else but self, it is no wonder that his perception of his own interests should be clear—he saw that his interests and his desires jumped together. For a time, it certainly did seem that there was antagonism between the two. The tempest of manly horror and just anger which passed over the country in the autumn of 1876, for a period seemed destined to submerge Lord Beaconsfield and everybody else, who was on the side of the Turk. But Lord Beaconsfield knows the English people: it is a knowledge of which he often boasts; and the boast is made in the tone of the foreigner who is eyeing with tolerant contempt from the easy height of his own superior blood the vagaries of an eccentric, vulgar, if not barbarous race. And that is the view of every genuine Jew for the Christian people among whom he lives. He bows down within the recesses of his heart before his own people, as still, if not the chosen of God, yet as immeasurably supreme among men; and other nations are but the mushroom races, whose fathers were barbarians when Judæa was the land of civilization. Let me not be misunderstood. I am not blaming the Jew for feeling thus. The feeling is most natural. The Jew *can* look back to a most glorious past; and it is the more natural that he should feed his imagination on the glories of that past, because of the lowly position to which the rise of Christianity has reduced

his race. I am only pointing out how this feeling operated on the mind of Lord Beaconsfield when dealing with the affairs of the English people. It is one of the most important factors in the case, without the consideration of which the case cannot be understood; and it is for this reason, and not from any share in vulgar bigotry myself nor any desire to excite it in others, that I speak of it in dealing with Lord Beaconsfield's conduct during the Russo-Turkish war.*

* Everybody knows that Lord Beaconsfield's works teem with passages in which the superiority of the Jewish to all other races is preached. I have given passages enough already from his works on that point. I propose now to add a few which prove that this respect for his own race is accompanied with its natural complement of contempt for other races. He makes Sidonia over and over again declare that he would not contaminate his pure Jewish blood by mingling it with the impure blood of the Gentile. Take this passage, for instance: Sidonia *loquitur*. "He calls me his cousin; he is a Nuevo of the fourteenth century. Very orthodox; but the tone of the old land and the old language have come out in him, as they will, though his blood is no longer clear, but has been modified by many Gothic intermarriages, which was never our case. We are pure Sephardim."—*Tancred*, new edition, 125. So Jewish blood is spoken of: take this for a specimen of the way the Gentiles are discussed. "We ought never to be surprised at anything that is done by the English," observed Fakredeen; "who are, after all, in a certain sense, savages."—*Ibid.* 436-7. These words Lord Beaconsfield puts into the mouth of one of his characters; but here is the way he speaks in his own person of the nations of Christendom. "And yet some flat-nosed Frank, full of bustle and puffed up with self-conceit (a race spawned perhaps in the morasses of some northern forest hardly yet cleared), talks of Progress!"—*Ibid.* 226-7. I must content myself with giving these passages in this place; there are scores of others of a like import throughout his works. These words of contempt for the Christians were written before Lord Beaconsfield had attained to any great eminence among Christians. If he despised them before he was one of their rulers, how much more must he do so since they became his subjects; and especially since they allowed him to fight the battle of Judæa while they persisted in thinking it was the battle of England!

To resume, then. Lord Beaconsfield boasts of his knowledge of the English people. Acting on that knowledge, he calculated that the new and suddenly awakened sympathy for the Bulgarians might be made to pass away in time, and to give way to the older and more firmly rooted feeling of hatred to Russia. He knew that hate of Russia was one of the most deeply rooted feelings in the English mind, and he knew also that in the circumstances of the two empires, abundant grounds of plausible appearance could be given for justifying this hate. That calculation, which was not very flattering to the good sense of the English public mind, unfortunately proved too true. The history of Lord Palmerston's almost dictatorial years of reign while he was in hopeless opposition, were also not lost upon Lord Beaconsfield. During those years, as I have shown, he had preached incessantly the creed of non-intervention in European quarrels, and that creed had been preached to the wind; while during the same period Lord Palmerston had been preaching the opposite gospel of active intervention and active hate of Russia, and had prospered upon it. Lord Beaconsfield, too, knew the English people sufficiently to calculate that appeals to the passions of hate, of defiance, of lust of conquest, would not be made in vain. There is no nation, indeed, which is not ready to yield to these passions if they be played on by a skilful master in favourable circumstances. As Lord Granville said with remarkable sagacity in answer to a deputation during the Russo-Turkish complications,

it is not possible for any Opposition to prevent a Government from going to war that has determined upon doing it. War, as he justly said, can be created by an appeal to feelings which are sometimes very noble, and sometimes very base. And so a tempest of public passion can be manufactured against which the dictates of sense and justice are absolutely impotent. These three, then, appear to me the chief motives which dictated the whole of Lord Beaconsfield's policy during the Russo-Turkish war: first, the desire to carry out a Hebrew policy; secondly, the desire to carry out that policy with the aid of Christendom; and thirdly, the belief that hatred of Russia and an appeal to warlike passions were the cards most likely to turn up trumps in the game of politics.

I now proceed to point out how, as it appears to me, Lord Beaconsfield played his game. It will not be expected of me that, on a controversy so recent, I should enter into into anything like lengthy details. It will be sufficient for my present purposes if I simply touch upon landmarks in the long-continued controversy.

The beginning, as everybody knows, of the great events that culminated in the Treaty of Berlin, was a small insurrection in the provinces of Bosnia and Herzogovina. The first important intervention of the English Government in respect of this insurrection took place in August, 1875, when the then Foreign Minister requested Austria, Servia, and Montenegro to

assist in putting down the insurrection.* Shortly after this came the proposal that the Consuls of the different powers should proceed to the scene of the insurrection, and endeavour to restore tranquillity. To this proposal Lord Beaconsfield's Government consented with reluctance, and only finally consented at the desire of the Turkish Government itself. The Premier, too, laid down distinctly that the proper policy of England in this quarrel between Turkey and her subjects was that of strict non-intervention. The *status quo* in Turkey should be maintained, and the duty of the English Government was to "deprecate interference with its condition," in order to allow Turkey and its subjects, in the course of time, "to find that condition which suited them best.† The plain interpretation of these words is that Turkey and her rebellious subjects should be allowed to fight it out until Turkey had succeeded in crushing the rebels. The mission of the Consuls failed, as it had a right to fail; and the next proposal came in the shape of the Andrassy Note. This Note, as is known, was drawn up by the Ministers of Austria, Germany, and Russia, and proposed nothing greater than the establishment of complete religious liberty, the abolition of tax farming, a change in the government of Bosnia and Herzogovina, the appointment of a mixed commission of Mussulmans

* In describing the earlier stages of the Eastern Question, I have followed the guidance of Mr. Sedley Taylor, in his excellent pamphlet on the conduct of the Ministry on the Eastern Question.

† Hansard, 3 S. ccxxxi. 206.

and Christians to carry out those reforms, and the improvement of the state of the rural population. To this Note Lord Beaconsfield's Government gave an assent which amounted to almost neutralising its effects, and there was in Constantinople the "most lively satisfaction" thereupon. The Note was delivered, the Porte promised to obey its commands, and nothing was done. In May, another attempt was made to bring about satisfactory relations between Turkey and her subjects, and this time it took the shape of the Berlin Memorandum. The proposals of this document, like those in the Andrassy Note, were of a most mild character. They were simply that there should be an armistice for two months between the insurgents and the Porte, and that during this period an attempt should be made to produce the return of peace. Among the bases for negotiations was laid down the not very extravagant demand that the Porte should find materials to rebuild the houses and churches of the refugees which had been destroyed. It must be remembered, too, that even this last modest suggestion was only a suggestion, and not a demand. To this Note, drawn up by Germany in union with Austria and Russia, the French and Italian Governments formed so little objection that they sent their adhesion by telegraph. The English Government, however, as everybody knows, refused their adhesion; and Mr. Disraeli was enabled, accordingly, to announce in the House of Commons, with gleeful satisfaction, that the Note would

never be presented.* And this decision was maintained notwithstanding the most earnest remonstrances of all the other powers. The Italian Foreign Minister regretted the decision of the English Ministry. The French Foreign Minister expressed "surprise and regret." Prince Gortschakoff also "deeply regretted" it. Count Andrassy was ready to delay the proposals in the hope that Her Majesty's Government might still be induced to give their co-operation; and Prince Bismarck expressed his readiness to accept any reasonable amendment in the Memorandum the English Government might propose. But all those appeals were in vain. Mr. Disraeli succeeded in breaking up the European concert, and in retaining for the Turkish Government the right to proceed in its own way of dealing with its subjects who were at peace and at war with her. Meantime, Turkey and its subjects were following out the advice of Mr. Disraeli, and were endeavouring "to find that condition which suited both of them best." The Berlin Memorandum was communicated on May 13, and was rejected on May 19, by the English Government; it was during this period that a portion of the Bulgarian massacres took place. The reader may start back in the thought that I am going to inflict upon him that oft-repeated tale of horror heaped upon horror. But I cannot wholly shirk the disagreeable question, whether it be palatable or not. I can only promise to be as brief as I can. The reports of those horrors began to make

* Hansard, 3 S. ccxxix. 1521.

their appearance on June 23, in the *Daily News*. Mr. Disraeli was questioned as to these reports in the House of Commons, and his invariable reply was to throw doubt on their containing anything like an approach to the truth. On July 10, 1876, he declared that "the Government was in constant communication with the Consuls at Belgrade, Ragusa, Chettinge, and other places;"* and from none of these places had come the information which confirmed the statement of the *Daily News*. It was immediately pointed out to him by Mr. Evelyn Ashley, that none of the three places he had named were in Turkey at all, and that the nearest of them was 200 miles from the scene of the alleged massacres in Turkey. Had the Government, Mr. Ashley pertinently asked, received any information from their Consul at Adrianople or Philippopolis? Mr. Disraeli's answer was that the Government was in "constant communication" with the Consuls, not only in the places he had named, but also "with those at the places in the Turkish dominions to which the hon. member for Poole (Mr. E. Ashley) had referred, but that in none of these communications had any of these details been mentioned.† This was most important information. Philippopolis, one of the towns named by Mr. Evelyn Ashley, was almost at the door of the place where these massacres were said to have taken place. If, therefore, the Consul posted there had reported that there were no massacres, his evidence was almost a

* Hansard, 3 S. ccxxx. 1181. † *Ibid.* 1186.

complete refutation of the whole story. What will be thought of Mr. Disraeli when the reader hears that there was no Consul at Philippopolis to hold communication with the Government—constant or otherwise? *

On July 17, Mr. Disraeli was again questioned as the truth of the shocking reports that were still appearing in the *Daily News*. Again his answer was of a reassuring character, and he went out of the way to say that the Circassians who were charged with these horrible doings were a maligned race. They had "lived peacefully for twenty years," "their conduct has been satisfactory, and there has been no imputation upon them of savage or turbulent behaviour. They have cultivated farms and built villages, and during the whole period I think there has been no complaint of these men." † Astonishing as was this picture of the gentle Circassian, it was more astonishing to find that Mr. Disraeli, in the very speech in which he made this statement with regard to them, quoted a despatch from Sir Henry Elliot in which that notoriously Turcophile diplomatist declared that there "is evidence that the employment of *Circassians* and Bashi-Bazouks had *led to the atrocities which were to be expected.*" ‡

* This fact comes out in a despatch which Sir H. Elliot writes to Lord Derby. In this despatch Sir H. Elliot says: "Since I wrote my preceding despatch, the Greek Minister has called upon me, and spoke of a report he had received from his Consul at Philippopolis where there there is no British Consular Agent."—Turkey, No. 3, 1876. 539.

† Hansard, 3 S. ccxxx. 1488. ‡ *Ibid.* 1489.

This is the place to speak of the evidence with regard to the question raised by the correspondence in the *Daily News* to which Mr. Disraeli gave the replies I have described. These replies were given, as has been seen, in July. It is now plainly proved from the public papers that from May onwards the Government had been in the receipt of despatches which warned them that the Bashi-Bazouks and Circassians were about to be employed in putting down the so-called Bulgarian insurrection, and that horrible atrocities were to be expected as a result of the employment of those irregulars.*

* I quote the quotations in Mr. Sedley Taylor's pamphlet.

M. Kyriatz, Eski-Zagra, to Vice-Consul Dubuis (received by Lord Derby May 19): "The Governor-General of the vilayet has telegraphed to the Kaïmakam of Lazara to arm all the Mussulmans, and to make them patrol the towns throughout the night, to avert any attack to be feared on the part of the Bulgarians. . . . I believe I am fulfilling a duty in . . . calling your attention to the imprudence of the measures taken by the Government in arming all the Mussulmans, who, as they are well known in this neighbourhood to be of the most savage disposition, will be guilty of every kind of excess." —Turkey, No. 3 (1876), No. 252, Enclosure 2 in No. 272. Vice-Consul Dupuis, Adrianople, to Sir H. Elliot (received by Lord Derby May 23): "I likewise inform your Excellency that the local authorities, as well as the Turkish Beys here, are displaying great activity in the enrolment of Bashi-Bazouks and other volunteers." . . . "I hear that in consequence of the disorders said to have been committed by the Bashi-Bazouks, the bazaars and shops in Philippopolis and Tatar-Bazardjik are closed, and the inhabitants are leaving in numbers. . . . A friend of mine, who returned last night, tells me that the state of the country between Philippopolis, Bellova, and Otleukeuis is deplorable to behold; that villages are burning in all directions of the compass; that in consequence of ignorance and apathy on the part of the Turkish functionaries the greatest disorder and confusion prevails there. It is reported that while gunpowder is being openly sold to the Turkish inhabitants in this city, it is refused to the Christians."—*Ibid.*, Enclosure 1 in No. 289. Same to same: "Hadji

The most remarkable of these despatches were two of Consul Reade, of Rustchuk, which were received by Lord Derby on June 2 and 7 respectively. In the first of these despatches the Consul remarks that the "arming of the Mussulmans and Circassians in the Vilayet, and the letting loose of the latter on the Bulgarians simply reported to be in revolt," was a "grave matter." "The lawless character of these Circassians," said Consul Reade, "is notorious;—they are not to be trusted at any time; to employ them, therefore, in the way I have stated at the present moment, is, in my opinion, to drive many who have hitherto remained quiet, to revolt."* And in the same despatch the

Achmet Aga, Rasim Bey, and other Turks of note here, are showing their patriotism by arming and maintaining at their own expense a corps of 200 Bashi-Bazouks each, for operations in the Balkans.—*Ibid.*, Enclosure 3 in No. 249. Vice-Consul Dupuis to Sir H. Elliot, received by Lord Derby June 2): "The general topic of conversation here the last few days is that the Bulgarians of the village of Otleukeui refusing to surrender, and taking refuge in a church or monastery, were bombarded by the troops under Hafiz Pasha, when upwards of three hundred men, women, and children were slaughtered. . . . The last item of intelligence I hear is that the troops have surrounded the village of Avradano, and that unless it surrenders it is feared the inhabitants will share the same fate as those of Otleukeui. Extraordinary activity is being displayed here by the authorities and others in recruiting, arming, and forwarding to the disturbed districts Bashi-Bazouks and Circassians. . . . I do not hear of any disorders having been committed by these troops in Adrianople; but I am assured that, once outside the city, they gave themselves up to all kinds of violence, and to the firing on women and other defenceless people in the villages and roads in this vicinity."—*Ibid.*, Enclosure 1 in No. 343. Same to same: "Reports continue to reach me of acts of insubordination, excesses, and disorders by the Bashi-Bazouks and Circassians, who, it is stated, rob, plunder, kill, and levy black-mail on peaceable people."—*Ibid.*, Enclosure 2 in No. 343.

* Turkey, No. 3, 1876, Enclosure in No. 346.

Consul spoke of the Mussulmans generally being armed on penalty of punishment; and in the second despatch this same Consul said, "What is condemned by every one . . . . is the arming and employment of Circassians. . . . . Those men cannot be kept under any sort of control; and whenever an opportunity offers, they do not hesitate to take advantage of it, and the consequence is that we are daily hearing of the grossest acts of violence on their part."* And Sir Henry Elliot himself, as has already been seen in describing a speech of Lord Beaconsfield, made use of these words in a despatch which was received by Lord Derby on June 8, 1876: "The Bulgarian insurrection appears unquestionably to be put down, although, I regret to say, with cruelty, and in some places with brutality. . . . There is evidence that the employment of Circassians and Bashi-Bazouks has led to the atrocities which were to be expected."† The despatches of which I have given these two specimens were received between the months of May and June, and in the face of those facts Mr. Disraeli in July was denying the existence of the Bulgarian atrocities, and giving the Circassians the reputation of Arcadian innocence! But this was not the strongest confirmation which the Ministry had received of the reports in the *Daily News*. On June 28, Lord Derby received from Consul Reade, whom I have already mentioned, a despatch in which he says that information had reached him that the Circassians "are committing atrocities, chiefly among

* *Ibid.*, Enclosure in No. 382. † *Ibid.*, No. 443.

the villages near the Balkans, which keep the whole of that quarter in a state of the greatest terror." He mentioned the rumour that the Circassians were "kidnapping children of Bulgarians killed in the late affairs;" and then he went on to say, "From what I can make out, I am really inclined to think that the object at this moment, in the late disturbed districts of Tirnova, is to diminish the number of Bulgarians as much as possible, for it is said that the Circassians seem to be doing all this with the connivance of its authorities." In other words, in the opinion of Consul Reade, the object of the Porte was to authorise wholesale massacres, so as to reduce the population of the unbelieving and rebellious subjects. In this same despatch Consul Reade declared that a Mussulman had been heard by a Bulgarian boasting in a café at Rustchuk that "even our schoolboys killed their five or six Bulgarians." "He praised the Circassians as having done great things, having for their motto, 'Let the Giaour die—strike him—let him perish;' and this Turk, in addition, was reported to have said that most of those who were killed were innocent and unarmed, that the number of the slain were probably nearer 25,000 or 26,000 than 5,000 or 6,000, and to have wound up his tale by the statement that this was a great loss to the country, as most of them were tax-paying people."

This despatch, I say, had been received by Lord Derby on June 28, and on July 31 Mr. Disraeli was asked what he thought of this communication; and what

did he think of it? He dismissed it contemptuously as utterly untrustworthy rubbish. "I was not justified," said he, "for a moment to adopt that coffee-house babble brought by an anonymous Bulgarian to a Consul as at all furnishing a basis of belief that the accounts subsequently received had any justification."* Again, on August 11, he was taxed upon the state of affairs in Turkey, and again all these stories of atrocities were dismissed as gross exaggerations manufactured for party purposes; and the integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire were still held up as the leading principle upon which the foreign policy of the English Government should be founded.†

These words are made the more memorable by a fact which was known to scarcely anybody by whom they were heard. Shortly after he had made this speech, Mr. Disraeli got up from his seat, went out, and never again returned to the House of Commons as one of its members. The next morning it was announced that he was about to be raised to the Peerage. The title he chose struck a large number of people with surprise, and a little disgust. It was known that the title was one for which the patent had actually been made out for Edmund Burke, and by which he would have been known to posterity if the hand of death had not interfered with him and the conferring of the honour. I say nothing as to what would be the result of a comparison of the careers of Burke and Lord Beaconsfield, but I

* Hansard, ccxxxi. 203. † *Ibid.* 1145.

think it does not require any reasoning to show that if Lord Beaconsfield were a man of ordinary instincts, he would have hesitated before he took the title which was associated in history with the illustrious name of another statesman.

Meantime the stories of the Bulgarian atrocities were appearing in the newspapers. The *Daily News* was, as already indicated, chief, if not first,* among the public journals in publishing accounts of the atrocities in Bulgaria. Informed by Mr. Pears, their correspondent in Constantinople, of what was going on, the proprietors of that paper despatched a special commissioner to investigate the facts on the spot. The gentleman selected was the late Mr. J. A. MacGahan. Never was there a happier choice for a journalistic task. I knew Mr. MacGahan well; I believe I can claim the privilege of having been one of his most intimate friends. For such a task as investigating the Bulgarian horrors he had all the requisites: courage to face the frowns of the Turkish authorities, perseverance to overcome the myriad-shaped obstacles they might put in his way; he was a man of good judgment and of unfailing accuracy as well as imagination; and his pen, while picturesque, never was tempted into the least sacrifice of fact to effect.

Poor MacGahan! let me turn aside for a moment to pay a brief tribute to the memory of one of the finest

* A writer in the *Spectator*, I believe, claims to have first attempted to draw the attention of the public to the subject.

characters I ever knew,—a man of a bravery that no danger could shake, of a modesty that no triumph could disturb; with a disposition so beautiful that he left not one enemy behind, and many friends, to whom his death must always leave life less bright.

The Eastern question was finally solved by the arms of the heroic soldiers of Russia. But to two men, neither of whom was a soldier, the great work of liberating the enslaved Christians of the East from the vilest tyranny that ever cursed the world, owes, perhaps, as much as to the legionaries of the Czar. One of those men was Mr. Gladstone, the other was Mr. J. A. MacGahan. Journalism has had many and glorious triumphs; but the proudest achievement which brightens its annals is the salvation of a country by the pen of a special correspondent. It is some satisfaction to find that the people of Bulgaria are sensible of MacGahan's great services; his name is now the subject of their popular ballads, and will probably be enshrined for ever in their grateful memories. But, alas! the instrument of all this mighty good died at thirty-three in a Constantinople hospital!

And what was the story Mr. MacGahan had to tell? He had to tell that sixty or seventy villages had been burned; that something like 15,000 or 16,000 people had been slaughtered;* that a large number of those dead were women and children;† that the bodies of

* "The Turkish Atrocities in Bulgaria: Letters of the Special Commissioner of the *Daily News*, J. A. MacGahan, Esq." 11.

† *Ibid.* 12.

men were flung to dogs; that the women, and even the little children of both sexes, were subjected to the vilest outrages;* and that all those outrages were committed without anything like real provocation on the part of the Bulgarians.† In the course of his inquiries Mr. MacGahan visited several of the villages in Bulgaria: he visited Raddovo, Otluk-Kui or Panagurishti, Perustitza, Avrat-Alan, Klissura, and Batak. And now let me give a brief summary of what he learned at each of those places. At Raddovo he found that of 160 houses, not one had been left standing. As the inhabitants had all fled before the arrival of the Turks, only twenty-two men had been killed, while all the women and children had escaped.‡ And at Raddovo, accordingly, the people had only to put up with the trifling inconvenience of trying to live without their houses, their furniture, or their means of existence.§ At Avrat-Alan he found that the people of the town, having surrendered in time, were spared; while 200 or 300 who were flying through the fields were killed; and all the women in the place, with scarcely an exception, were violated by soldiers who were still reeking with the blood of a massacre close by, of which I shall have to speak immediately.‖ At Klissura, not one of 700 houses was left standing.¶ The people were thus condemned to starvation; and besides this, though MacGahan does not note the fact, 250

* *Ibid.*
† *Ibid.* 13.
‡ *Ibid.* 16.
§ *Ibid.* 17.
‖ *Ibid.* 85-6.
¶ *Ibid.* 72.

people were killed.* We have now gone through three villages: in two of those all the houses had been destroyed, and some hundreds of the inhabitants killed; in the third, the houses were not burned, but were plundered; and while the men in the town were spared, about 250 in the fields were killed, and all the women were violated. Those are horrors sufficient to excite indignation enough, but they appear as mere trifling incidents in comparison with the diabolical outrages which took place in other villages. At Otluk-Kui a rising occurred on the 2nd of May; ten days afterwards, Hafiz Pasha, with regulars, Bashi-Bazouks, and two or three pieces of artillery, arrived before the place. The insurrection immediately collapsed, one body of the insurgents—who were 250 in all—having fled, and the other taken a wrong direction.† There was, therefore, nothing for Hafiz Pasha to do but to enter the town and take possession. Instead of doing that, he bombarded the place without asking it to surrender,—a fate which was the more terrible because the ordinary population had been increased by 5,000 or 6,000 refugees from neighbouring villages.‡

Till midnight of the 12th the bombardment continued. "Then the loud-mouthed dogs of war ceased their clamour; they had done their work; it was now the turn of the sabre."§ During the night and the following morning the soldiers entered the town; it

* Baring's Report.
† MacGahan, 42-3.
‡ *Ibid.* 43.
§ *Ibid.*

was pillaged and then fired; neither age nor sex was spared, and 3,000 people—men, women, and children—were killed.* Not a woman in the place appeared to have escaped outrage.† "Mothers were outraged in the presence of their daughters; young girls, in the presence of their mothers, of their sisters and brothers."‡ A girl of ten years was violated, another of twelve;§ and of a dozen of girls from twelve to fifteen years old, two were outraged and killed, and the remainder outraged.‖ A young girl of sixteen was outraged by three or four Bashi-Bazouks in presence of her father, who was aged and blind, and then was killed by the same bullet as she was endeavouring to save the old man's life.¶

Perustitza consisted of 350 houses, and had 2,000 or 2,500 inhabitants.** According to the account which the people themselves gave to Mr. MacGahan, they applied several times for the protection of regular troops to Aziz Pasha, without avail.†† Achmet-Aga meantime offered them the protection of Bashi-Bazouks; but having some natural distrust of such shepherds, they refused the assistance, and in consequence of some circumstances that were in dispute, killed the two bearers of this message.‡‡ The villagers now prepared for defence, making one of their churches their citadel.§§ On Tuesday morning, May 11, the

* *Ibid.*
† *Ibid.* 45.
‡ *Ibid.* 46.
§ *Ibid.*
‖ *Ibid.*
¶ *Ibid.* 46-7.
** *Ibid.* 52.
†† *Ibid.* 53-5.
‡‡ *Ibid.* 54.
§§ *Ibid.* 55.

Bashi-Bazouks appeared.* Some of the people went out, gave up their arms, and were killed. Some fled to the fields, and, whenever overtaken by the Bashi-Bazouks, were killed. The remainder stuck to the church.† On Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, the Bashi-Bazouks, employed themselves in pillaging and burning the surrounding villages, occasionally firing a shot at the church in which the villagers had taken refuge.‡ Meantime the people remained in the church, so closely packed that it was impossible to lie down, terrified by the occasional shots and by the glare of the burning villages around.§ On the Thursday afternoon Aziz Pasha arrived with his regulars, and, according to MacGahan, before he had summoned the people to surrender, began the bombardment of the church.‖ The villagers were so panic-struck that they fled to another church, where they were less protected than before.¶ Aziz Pasha bombarded this as he had bombarded the other church.** The people had, meantime, sent messengers to Aziz Pasha asking for peace; some of those were killed before they reached Aziz Pasha,†† others were killed on their way back. On the Friday night, when this bombardment in the second church was taking place, at least one man killed his wife and children and then himself.‡‡ On Saturday, at last, the people went out, and were spared.§§ About

* *Ibid.* 56.
† *Ibid.*
‡ *Ibid.* 57.
§ *Ibid.* 58.
‖ *Ibid.* 59.
¶ *Ibid.* 59-60.
** *Ibid.* 60-61.
†† *Ibid.* 63-4.
‡‡ *Ibid.* 65-6, and Mr. Baring's Report.
§§ *Ibid.* 61.

1,000 or 1,600 had been killed.* But all these horrors, great as they are, sink into insignificance beside those of Batak.

While Mr. MacGahan was at Pestera, a number of people crowded round the place where he was staying, whom at first he supposed to belong to the town itself; they turned out, however, to be fugitives from Batak.† They came to tell the strangers the story of the tragedy enacted in their home. One remarkwhich Mr. MacGahan makes at this point of his narrative is worthy of observation. He was acquainted with the Russian language, having lived for some time at St. Petersburg, and having, by an act of daring rarely paralleled, succeeded in accompanying the Russian army during the Khivan expedition. He declares that the language of those Bulgarians was so like Russian, that he could understand a great deal of it. He describes the people as singularly like the Russians in features, expression, and tone of voice. He asks, with some appearance of reason, if we should be surprised that under these circumstances the Russians should have sympathised with the Bulgarian subjects of Turkey's foul tyranny.‡ In that strange fit of madness which passed over this country under the malign influence of Lord Beaconsfield, one of the most curious phenomena was the obstinate blindness with which people refused to accept facts which were as well ascertained as the daily rising of

* *Ibid.* 18.
† *Ibid.* 62.
‡ *Ibid.* 19-20.

the sun. At first sight it would appear scarcely credible that any one could doubt that a people should have the keenest sympathy with another people on their border, belonging to the same race, speaking almost the same tongue, professing the same creed, whose men were massacred, whose women were outraged and massacred, whose children were outraged and massacred by men of another race, a different religion, another tongue! Yet there were people in England ready to deny that the Sclav Christians of Russia could have any real feeling for the Sclav Christians of Bulgaria whom Turkey so ruthlessly oppressed! Nay, this blindness to patent fact went further. The very men who at one season were strongest in their belief, loudest in their denunciation of the atrocities I am now describing, in another season, from a change in their mood, and without any change whatever in the facts, were actually ready to as strongly disbelieve that there were ever any such atrocities at all, and to as vehemently denounce anybody who echoed their own denunciations of a short time previously!

To return to MacGahan's narrative. The fugitives whom he met at Pestera followed him and his companions in a procession to Batak.* As they approached the doomed village, they began to find signs of the great disaster: they met mills that were silent, and they saw hill-sides covered with over-ripe corn, rotting for want of hands to reap it. But such signs of ravage were soon forgotten in the sight that next met their eyes.

* *Ibid.* 20.

On a slope overlooking the town they observed a number of dogs, which ran away angry at their approach; and on going near, found these animals had been feasting on a large heap of dead.* That heap, MacGahan afterwards found out, consisted of 200 young girls, who had been kept prisoners for some days, outraged, and finally beheaded!† "From my saddle," he writes, "I counted about a hundred skulls, not including those that were hidden beneath the others in the ghastly heap, nor those that were scattered far and wide through the fields."‡ From this spot they looked down on the town. Not a roof, not a whole wall was left standing; and there came up to their ears "a low, plaintive wail, like the 'keening' of the Irish over their dead."§ They descended into the town; they saw in the houses women wailing over their lost husbands, brothers, children, "beating their heads and wringing their hands."‖ "This was the explanation of the curious sound we had heard when up on the hill. As we advanced there were more and more; some sitting on the heaps of stones that covered the floors of their houses; others walking up and down before their doors, wringing their hands and repeating the same despairing wail. . . . . As we proceeded, most of them fell into line behind us, and they finally formed a procession of four or five hundred people, mostly women and children, who followed us about wherever we went with their mournful cries. Such a sound as their

* *Ibid.* 22.
† *Ibid.* 32-3.
‡ *Ibid.* 23.
§ *Ibid.* 22.
‖ *Ibid.* 23-4.

united voices sent up to heaven I hope never to hear again."

As they passed on, they saw the corpse of a young girl not more than fifteen. "There was a large gash in the skull, to which a mass of rich brown hair, nearly a yard long, still clung, trailing in the dust."* Next they saw "the skeletons of two children lying side by side," "with frightful sabre cuts in their little skulls."† As they approached the middle of the town, "bones, skeletons, and skulls became more numerous." 'There was not a house beneath the ruins of which we did not perceive human remains, and the street besides was strewn with them."‡ "Before many of the doorways women were walking up and down wailing their funeral chant."§ One of them dragged MacGahan to see the corpse of a young girl. "I could only turn round," he says, "and walk out sick at heart, leaving her alone with her skeleton."‖ A few steps further, he saw another woman "rocking herself to and fro, and uttering moans heart-rending beyond anything I could have imagined." "Her head was buried in her hands, while her fingers were unconsciously twisting and tearing her hair, as she gazed into her lap, where lay three little skulls with the hair still clinging to them."¶ They next came to the school-house and the church. In the school lay "the bones and ashes of two hundred women burnt alive within those four walls." "Just beside

* *Ibid.* 26. ‡ *Ibid.* 27. ‖ *Ibid.*
† *Ibid.* § *Ibid.* ¶ *Ibid.*

the school-house is a broad shallow pit; there were burned a hundred bodies two weeks after the massacre."* They entered the churchyard. The whole of the little churchyard was heaped up with dead bodies to the depth of three or four feet.† "We were told that there were three thousand people lying here in this little churchyard alone, and we could well believe it." ‡ And of those three thousand, many, if not most, were women and children. §

Next they looked into the church. "What we saw there was too frightful for more than a hasty glance."‖ "An immense number of bodies had been partly burnt there, and the charred and blackened remains, that seemed to fill it half-way up to the low dark arches, and made them lower and darker still, were lying in a state of putrefaction too frightful to look upon. I had never imagined anything so horrible. We all turned away sick and faint, and staggered out of the fearful pest-house, glad to get out into the street again."¶ Everywhere throughout the town they saw similar scenes. "Skeletons of men

* *Ibid.* 28. † *Ibid.* ‡ *Ibid.* 29.

§ "It was a fearful sight—a sight to haunt one through life. There were little curly heads there in that festering mass, crushed down by heavy stones; little feet not as long as your finger on which the flesh was dried hard, by the ardent heat, before it had time to decompose; little baby hands stretched out as if for help; babes that had died wondering at the bright gleam of sabres and the red hands of the fierce-eyed men who wielded them; children who had died shrinking with fright and terror; young girls who had died sobbing and begging for mercy; mothers who died trying to shield their little ones with their own weak bodies, all lying together, festering in one horrid mass." —*Ibid.* 29.

‖ *Ibid.* 29. ¶ *Ibid.* 29.

with the clothing and flesh still hanging to, and rotting together; skulls of women, with the hair dragging in the dust; bones of children and of infants everywhere."* Here they were shown a house where twenty people had been burned alive; another, where twelve girls had been slaughtered, "as their bones amply testified."† What showed most plainly the completeness of the massacre was the desolation of entire families. An old woman told MacGahan that she had three sons, who were all married, and had twelve children: of all those nineteen people, but this poor old woman remained.‡ Out of another family of thirty-nine, only eight were left; out of one of twenty-five, but seven; of twenty, but eight."§ And finally, MacGahan, estimating the entire loss of life, says that of "the eight or nine thousand people who made up the population of the place, there are only twelve or fifteen hundred left!" ‖

Such was the story told by Mr. MacGahan, and such was the story a considerable part of which had been published at the very time Lord Beaconsfield was declaring that the outrages in Bulgaria were grossly exaggerated. MacGahan's statements were immediately confirmed by Mr. Eugene Schuyler, the then American Secretary of Legation, and now American Consul at Birmingham; and let me say parenthetically that to this distinguished *littérateur* the work of Christian redemption in the East owes infinite gratitude. But

* *Ibid.*
† *Ibid.* 29-30.
‡ *Ibid.* 31.
§ *Ibid.*
‖ *Ibid.* 30.

confirmation of Mr. MacGahan's story, even stronger than that of Mr. Schuyler's, was soon to come: worried by persistent interrogation in the House of Commons, the Ministry at last were compelled to send one of their *employés* to investigate the circumstances. I do not wish to question in the least the impartiality of Mr. Walter Baring, but I think I am safe in saying that he had no sympathy with those who sought to emancipate the Bulgarians from Turkish rule, and that he approached the investigation of those horrors with no predisposition to accept the current rumours. There was, I venture to think, a strong expectation that his report would annihilate the statements of MacGahan in the *Daily News*. And even when the report was presented, Sir Henry Elliot made the comment that it showed some of the statements made to be "vastly exaggerated."* Let us then compare the statements of Mr. Baring's report with those in MacGahan's letters. MacGahan stated that in Raddovo, out of 160 houses, not one was left standing, and that about twenty-two men were killed. Mr. Baring states that the place was totally burnt; puts down the number of houses destroyed as 177, and the number of people killed as twenty-five—that is to say, he gives a larger estimate than MacGahan of the houses destroyed and people killed in this village.† MacGahan's statement with

* Despatch to Lord Derby dated September 5, 1876.

† The town which Mr. MacGahan calls Raddovo appears in Mr. Baring's report as Radilovo.

regard to Klissura is that not one out of 700 houses was left standing; but he says nothing of the number of persons killed. Mr. Baring's statement in regard to Klissura is that, out of 800 houses, not one was left standing; and besides thus increasing by a hundred MacGahan's estimate of the houses destroyed, adds the information that 250 people were killed. In the case of Avrat-Alan, the statement of Mr. MacGahan is that the Turks, sated with their feast of blood and lust at Otluk-Kui, had confined themselves to pillaging all the houses and outraging all the women. Mr. Baring's statement is, that the place "was completely pillaged," and that "130 people, including strangers, were killed." He says nothing either in denial or confirmation of the outrages on women, but he alludes to a shocking story about a boy. Mr. MacGahan tells us that in Otluk-Kui one-fourth of the houses were burned; and he estimates the number of killed at about 3,000; 400 being inhabitants of the town, and the remainder strangers. Mr. Baring, estimating the entire number of houses at 2,000, says that between 400 and 500—or about one-fourth, as Mr. MacGahan puts it—were burned. With regard to the number of persons killed, Mr. Baring puts down the number of inhabitants killed as 763—that is, nearly double the number given by MacGahan; while the strangers killed he puts down as 1,000. Mr. Baring's total estimate, then, of persons killed is 1,763, while Mr. MacGahan's is 3,000. This is certainly a considerable discrepancy, but Mr.

MacGahan in this case gives his numbers with some doubt, remarking that Hafiz Pasha had, unlike Achmet Aga, the murderer of Batak, buried his dead, and so destroyed the best evidence of his guilt.* The case of Otluk-Kui is accordingly one in which much was left to conjecture, and in which two persons anxious for the truth might honestly differ: in any case, Mr. Baring's lower estimate of 1,763 is sufficient to show that there was a horrible massacre. In Perustiza, there were, according to Mr. MacGahan, 350 houses, of which not one was left standing; and he estimates the number of persons killed as from 1,000 to 1,500. Mr. Baring also states that out of 350 houses not one was left standing, but his estimate of the killed does not go beyond 750,—"among whom," he says, "there are many women and children." He also tells practically the same story of the siege of the two churches as Mr. MacGahan. Finally, as to the case of Batak, the agreement of Mr. Baring's account with that of Mr. MacGahan is still more complete. MacGahan states that all the houses were burned; so does Mr. Baring. Mr. Baring estimates the number of persons killed in the church and churchyard at but 1,000 or 1,200, but he gives quite as horrible a picture of the scene as Mr. MacGahan. He tells the same tale of seeing the corpses unburied two months and a half after the massacre,—of girls slashed by yataghans, with their hair still on the ground.† And with

* Mr. Schuyler gives the same estimate as Mr. MacGahan.

† "I visited this valley of the shadow of death on the 31st July, more

regard to the church, he adds the additional detail to Mr. MacGahan's account, that the Bashi-Bazouks tore off the tiles of the church, and "threw burning pieces of wood, and rags steeped in petroleum, among the mass of the unhappy human beings inside."

Outside the town, Mr. MacGahan counted about a hundred skulls from his saddle; Mr. Baring counted sixty. Mr. MacGahan says the bodies there were beheaded; so does Mr. Baring. Mr. MacGahan says they were all women; Mr. Baring says many were women.* Mr. MacGahan gives no details of persons tortured; Mr. Baring gives the names of two persons who were roasted, and one whose ears, nose, hands, and feet were cut off. Finally, Mr. MacGahan estimates the number of killed at 6,500; Mr. Baring, at 5,000. Such a difference in such immensity of atrocity is not material. As Mr. Baring remarks of his estimate, "whether the slain are to be counted by hundreds or by thousands, does not lessen in the least degree the criminality of the slayers. The intention was to exterminate all except

than two months and a half after the massacre; but still the stench was so overpowering that one could hardly force one's way into the churchyard. In the street at every step lay human remains, rotting and sweltering in the summer sun—here a skull of an old woman, with the grey hair attached to it—there the false tress of some unhappy girl, slashed in half by a yataghan; the head which it had adorned had been probably carried off to be devoured by some of the dogs, who up to this have been the only scavengers."

* "Just outside the village I counted more than sixty skulls in a little hollow, and it was evident from their appearance that nearly all of them had been severed from their bodies by axes and yataghans. From the remains of female wearing apparel scattered about, it is plain that many of the persons here massacred were women."

those few girls (probably about eighty) whom they carried off to satisfy their lusts. Those that escaped owed their safety to their own good fortune, and not to the tender mercy of their neighbours."

I have now traced the reports of Mr. MacGahan and Mr. Baring in reference to the principal villages which the former visited, and I claim to have shown that, to all practical purposes, the reports agree. In some cases, Mr. MacGahan's estimate of the houses destroyed and the persons killed is higher than that of Mr. Baring; in other cases, Mr. Baring's estimate is higher than that of Mr. MacGahan. But they are agreed in giving the same picture of villages entirely destroyed, and of men, women, and children massacred ruthlessly. But Mr. Baring, having visited more places than Mr. MacGahan, gives even a darker, because a fuller picture. Mr. Baring gives fuller details of the massacre at Bazardjik by the heroic Chefket Pasha, to which Mr. MacGahan but cursorily alludes; and he also describes the scenes of horror to the north of the Balkans, while all those mentioned by Mr. MacGahan took place to the south. Mr. Baring corroborates Mr. MacGahan not only in the main point of the number of persons killed, but in other important particulars also. He agrees with Mr. MacGahan, that this destruction of their houses would expose the surviving villagers to death by famine, and he confirms the statement that from those plundered wretches the inhuman authorities of Constantinople were still levying taxes! Mr. MacGahan says the leaders in the atrocities were deco-

rated. Mr. Baring comments with scorn on the same fact.

But one point more remains. What was the provocation given for this massacre? On this point, the difference between Mr. MacGahan and Mr. Baring is great at first sight, and small on examination. Mr. Baring attributes the insurrection mainly to foreign emissaries; but a fuse cannot hurt where there is no gunpowder; and if the misgovernment in Bulgaria were not frightful, no foreign emissaries could have induced the Bulgarians to encounter the horrible risks of insurrection. He himself concedes the whole point, when he says that "wherever there is Turkish rule, there, owing to its inherent faults, there will be Christian discontent." And now as to the overt acts which the Christians committed in carrying out their rebellion. At Raddovo, two Turks were killed; at Klissura, thirteen; at Perustitza, three; and at Batak, three. At Avrat-Alan alone was there anything like killing on a large scale, for there the Bulgarians killed sixty-six Mohammedan gipsies. So far as to men: as to women, I find no mention of any having been killed at Klissura; none were killed at Raddovo; none were killed at Perustitza; two were killed at Otluk-Kui; and one at Avrat-Alan. Of the two killed at Otluk-Kui, one, according to Mr. MacGahan, was killed by accident;* the other, Mr. MacGahan states, used a sabre, and Mr. Baring confirms the report. And thus, the number of women killed, without provocation and purposely, in

* MacGahan, 41.

these five villages, amounts to one! And be it remarked that in the two villages which suffered most, not one Turkish woman was killed, accidentally or otherwise. Not one Turkish woman was killed in Perustitza; not one Turkish woman was killed in Batak. Finally, as to the places where insurrection took the shape of armed defence, the insurrection broke miserably down almost at the first sight of attack. The villages, where those poor shadows of a rising flitted ghastly on the scene for a few brief days, were chiefly Klissura, Otluk-Kui, Avrat-Alan, and Perustitza. At Klissura, Mr. Baring does not believe "the story of the Bashi-Bazouks having summoned the villagers to surrender." At Otluk-Kiu, the resistance Hafiz Pasha met "was very slight." At Avrat-Alan, when Hafiz Pasha came, "the inhabitants made immediate submission." And as to Perustitza, he does not find that any summons was sent to surrender by Reschid Pasha, commander of the regulars; and he declares that, while resistance was offered to the Bashi-Bazouks, that "offered to his"—Reschid's—"regulars would probably not have been severe." This, then, is Mr. Baring's account of the provocation: in but one case was any considerable body of Turks killed; but two women were killed without provocation—one of those two, according to Mr. MacGahan, being shot by accident; the insurgents made scarcely any resistance; and they were not asked in the worst cases to surrender at all. Let us sum up the case, as given by Mr. Baring, in just two instances out of the many. At Perustitza,

three Turkish men were killed, but no Turkish woman; 750 Christians, among whom were "many women and children," were killed. At Batak, three Turkish men were killed, but no Turkish woman; and 5,000 Christian men, women, and children were killed. Finally, Mr. Baring only gives one case of a Turkish woman being outraged, and not one case of a Turkish child being ill-treated.

Such was the story of Bulgaria. We all remember the effect which Mr. MacGahan's letters produced on the English people; how a tempest of righteous indignation swept over the country, and the awakened and shocked conscience of the nation spoke with a clearness, a unanimity, a thunderous swell, that has been declared by competent judges unparalleled in our history. But one thing was now wanting to give its full force to this great national awakening from ignorant participation in a heinous crime: it wanted the guidance of a fit leader,—and the fit leader appeared.

In September of 1876, Mr. Gladstone published his pamphlet on the "Bulgarian Horrors," and from that moment forward he has stood forth as the protagonist of the Christian cause of the East. In advocating that cause, he has had to endure bitter adversity, he has had to pass through a whirlwind of vituperation; from scarcely any variety of charge that can be brought against a statesman or a man, has he been held free. He has been accused of the high crime of treason, and the low weakness of personal jealousy; he has been described at once as a most calculating conspirator,

and a trifler of hysterical impulsiveness. Cynics have sneered at him; scribes have attempted to write him down; mobs have hissed at him. But he can bear within his bosom a consciousness that may make his heart swell the prouder because of those displays of unscrupulous, unfeeling, and brutal hate. Throughout all this great contest, he has carried with him the approval of all that is ablest intellectually and highest morally throughout the world. In 1876, he could look back on a career of magnificent beneficence: he had administered the finances of England as they had never been administered before; he had freed the Irish Catholic from the yoke of religious ascendency, and the Irish tenant from legalized plunder; he had rescued the English army from the foul contamination of purchased rank, and the voter from the tyranny of the landlord and the corruption of the capitalist; and for the first time, after her six centuries of Parliamentary rule, England received from his hands a real Education Act. But great as were these achievements, they sink into insignificance in the minds of many before his work on the Eastern question. His single voice has saved England from a great national crime; has shaken a foul and apparently everlasting tyranny to atoms; and has elevated to the dignity of freemen the most utterly enslaved populations in the civilized world. That single achievement entitles him to a place among the highest, the noblest, and the greatest benefactors of the human race.

During all this period of public passion Lord Beaconsfield obstinately held his peace. At last it

was announced that the world was about to hear what he had to say, and everybody looked forward with the most feverish expectations to the speech he was going to deliver. Aylesbury, as is known, was the place chosen for this most important pronouncement. It is easy to guess what kind of speech the public expected. The Bulgarian atrocities had by this time been proved beyond the smallest shadow of doubt; and they were shown to have reached proportions in point of number, of unspeakable cruelty, ghastly horror, almost unparalleled in the history of mankind. Lord Beaconsfield, under those circumstances, had a duty to perform, which might have been humiliating in the eyes of the mean, but would be glorious in those of the generous. He had mocked at the reports of those atrocities as exaggerations, fables, coffee-house babble. And he had declined to consider them as offering any ground for consideration in forming his policy. But unquestionable facts now stood before him in terrible contradiction to his light-hearted denials; and the whole country lay ready to his hand to follow him in a change from the old bad ways of alliance with the Turk. Would he be honest enough to admit that he had been wrong—grossly wrong? Had he a heart big enough to respond to the generous passion of the English people? The memory is still fresh of the way in which those expectations were answered. Lord Beaconsfield made no apology for his past errors as to fact; and was still determined to stick by the

Turk. Nay, more; he managed in this same speech to make one most important addition to the already lofty structure of his misstatements on the Eastern question. A very common complaint against him had been that, when he rejected the Berlin Memorandum, he had not met that proposal by a counter-plan of his own. His reply was that this was altogether a misrepresentation. His Government had made proposals of their own: those proposals had been the subject "of daily and hourly communication between the other Powers and England," and they were just on the point of leading to a beneficent peace when Servia declared war. What will the reader say when he learns that there is almost overwhelming ground for believing that there is not one word of foundation for this immense superstructure of statement?*

* "On having recourse," comments Mr. Sedley Taylor on this passage, "to the Blue Book where these asserted negotiations ought to be detailed in their due order, it is most staggering to discover not a vestige of them, or of anything like them. The following question then arises: At what point between the rejection of the Berlin Memorandum by Lord Derby's despatch of May 19, and the declaration of war by the Prince of Servia on July 1, *can* all this 'laying down of principles,' all this 'daily and hourly communication with the other Powers,' have occurred? This question admits of being answered by an application of what mathematicians call the 'method of exhaustion,' as follows: These negotiations did not begin immediately after the rejection of the Berlin proposals; for Lord Derby told the House of Lords (Hansard, July 31,) it would have been unreasonable to expect the Northern Powers at what was a moment of some soreness to have at once accepted a proposal on a different basis, even if the Government 'had had such a proposal to make.' A week later these negotiations had not been commenced; for on May 27 Lord Derby told the

"Well," said Lord Beaconsfield, "we did propose some on our own part. My noble friend Lord Derby . . . . . lost no time in laying down the principles upon which he thought that the relations between the Porte and its Christian subjects ought to be established." "These communications," he continued, "were occurring constantly, I may say, between Her Majesty's Government and the five other Powers. . . . . If you ask me," he went on to say, "to sum up in two sentences the result of what was, of course, daily and hourly communication between the

French Ambassador (Turkey, No. 3, 1876, No. 305,) that in his opinion, 'unless something could be done to detach Montenegro from the insurgents, or effectually prevent their receiving assistance through and from Montenegro, no useful result in the way of pacification could be expected.' Up to June 2, these negotiations had not been started; for on that day Lord Derby wrote to our Ambassador at Vienna (*Ibid.* No. 348) that Her Majesty's Government were 'unable to do more than express their regret at not being able to act with the other Powers who had concurred in the Berlin proposals.' On June 12, these negotiations were still not on foot; for on that day Lord Derby told the Russian Envoy (*Ibid.* No. 427) that in his view 'nothing remained except to allow the renewal of the struggle until success should have declared itself . . . on one side or the other.' Up to June 19 the Great Powers knew nothing of these negotiations; for on that day the Russian Ambassador in London, (*Ibid.* No. 472,) by direction of Prince Gortschakoff, called at the Foreign Office to ask Lord Derby if the London Cabinet had any plan for effecting a pacification, to communicate it to that of St. Petersburg. Up to June 22 these negotiations were still non-existent; for on that day Lord Derby told the Austrian Ambassador (*Ibid.* No. 481) that Her Majesty's Government were 'ready to take part in the work of pacification when they saw a chance of doing so with effect. That if they now abstained, it was only because they saw nothing to be done. When circumstances led them to alter that opinion their inaction would cease.' On June 28 these negotiations were still uncommenced: for

Powers or their representatives in England, I must tell you this, that in the late spring of this year, peace, and peace on principles which would have been approved by every wise and good man, might have been accomplished. What happened? That happened which was not expected. Servia declared war upon Turkey." What are we to say to such a Minister? I have in the course of this narrative given instance after instance, until I have probably wearied the reader, of statements of Lord Beaconsfield's which were in the grossest and most palpable contradiction with fact. I

on that day Lord Derby stated to Count Schouvaloff (*Ibid.* No. 502) that he 'thought it premature to say more than that Her Majesty's Government would gladly concur in any practicable plan for the amelioration of the local government of the Turkish provinces.' Finally, up to June 29 no 'principles' had been 'laid down' by Lord Derby; for in his despatch of that date to the Russian Ambassador (*Ibid.* No. 506) all is still in the future. 'Her Majesty's Government will willingly join in recommending such reforms in the administration of the revolted provinces, as on full examination they may believe to be practicable.' This brings us to within two days of that on which the war manifesto of the Prince of Servia was issued (July 1). We seem thus forced to the conclusion that this whole asserted chain of negotiations had no real existence, and was wholly conjured up by the imagination of our Prime Minister. It would be ungenerous to withhold from Lord Derby the tribute of respectful sympathy due to a statesman who must negotiate with foreign diplomats under a liability to such irruptions, on the part of his chief, from the regions of romance. To Lord Beaconsfield, absorbed as he seems to have been in maintaining the integrity of Turkey, some less dangerous mode of handling that of Great Britain might with advantage have been recommended."—*The Conduct of Her Majesty's Ministers on the Eastern Question*, by Sedley Taylor, M.A., 32—34. Lord Beaconsfield afterwards made the explanation that negotiations were going on, although not recorded in the Blue Books! Very strange, if true!

may be accused, and I fear justly accused, of being monotonous in my repetition of those charges against Lord Beaconsfield, but the monotony of my exposure is the result of the monotony of his imposture. It is the same story from beginning to end. I am not the biographer of a creature of my imagination, and to me is not given the privilege of fashioning the actions and the character of the man whose life I am describing in obedience to what I might consider the laws of art or of probability. I cannot relieve my picture with light and shade. I have to stick obstinately to fact; and if I have to repeat myself over and over again, it is because Lord Beaconsfield is the same from the time when as a stripling he sought election in 1832, down to this very moment when he is seventy-four years of age, and the ruler of this great Empire. It is not my fault that he has carried into manhood and into old age the follies, the faults, and the scandals of his youth. It might have been expected, even from him, that the responsibilities of his great station would have exercised some sobering influence upon his character, and some purifying effect upon his principles of conduct; but, as in the instance just quoted, I find him again making the most unfounded statements, although the Premier of England, and although every one of those statements affected the existence of millions of human beings in the present, and millions of human beings in the future.

This then was the reply Lord Beaconsfield had to give to that tremendous storm of righteous public indignation. Not one word of real sympathy had he for the

victims of Turkish massacres, Turkish lust, and Turkish atrocities of every imaginable character. The cries of these widows and children pierced not his ear and moved not his heart; and he worked on steadily in his firm purpose of pursuing the Hebrew and Turkish policy in spite of whatever misery to Christian man and woman and child that policy might involve.* This, too, was the speech by which he first signalised his attainment of the title which was destined for the ever-memorable statesman, whose lofty soul and whose great heart have, as much as his splendid intellect, secured for him everlasting fame.

Let me make about this Aylesbury speech one remark more. Everybody who is frank must acknowledge that Lord Beaconsfield, when he first had to deal with this Eastern difficulty, was met by a traditional policy which had been approved of by nearly all his predecessors. Nobody can fairly deny that the maintenance of the independence and integrity of Turkey was one of the most firm traditions of English policy, and was one which the people of England had been taught by the majority of their rulers to consider as one of England's greatest interests. But the Bulgarian atrocities, coming with the

* Another cause for the indifference of Lord Beaconsfield and all his fellow-Jews to the sufferings of the Turkish Christians is that, unfortunately, some of those previously emancipated employed their liberty in oppressing the Hebrew race with the ferocity of the Middle Ages. Vindictiveness is not a passion wholly foreign to Lord Beaconsfield's nature; and I have little doubt that, in his anti-Christian policy, he was not uninfluenced by a desire to avenge the wrongs his race had suffered in those Eastern regions.

thunderous awakening of an earthquake, had swept away for the moment this whole policy founded on falsehood and injustice, and it was quite open to Lord Beaconsfield,—if his heart were at all susceptible to the enlightening influence of the voice of humanity and justice,—to have changed his opinions, and to have accepted, as the English people did, the reversal of his preconceived views. He had the fullest opportunity at that moment of making a new and glorious departure in the foreign policy of this country in the East. But he rejected the grand occasion. From first to last his policy was persistently, uniformly, without interruption, a policy of friendship to the Turk and the oppressor, and hate to the Christian and the oppressed.* He took no advantage of the noble passions that were then existing in the public mind, to lead on the people still further on the right path upon which they had so enthusiastically entered. It must also be

* Let my use of the word "Christian" in discussing this question not be misunderstood. I have no desire whatever to discuss the question on a religious basis. If the majority of the Turkish subjects were Mussulmans whom a Christian confederation of Pashas at Constantinople were plundering, ravaging, and assassinating, my opinion would be just as strongly in favour of the Mussulman majority, and as strongly against the Christian minority, as it is now in favour of the Christian majority and against the Mahometan minority. My use of the word "Christian" must therefore be taken simply as an employment of one of the terms by which those subjects of Turkey are best known. The only occasion on which I use it, meaning it to bear its distinctly religious signification, is when I am speaking of the policy of Lord Beaconsfield personally. It is part of my case against him that he viewed this whole Eastern controversy from the Jew's standpoint—from the standpoint of the enemy and not the friend of Christians.

remembered, that Lord Beaconsfield had an opportunity, in the disposition of his colleagues, as in the transformation of public opinion, for revolutionising his policy. It is now as well known as any fact in the whole history of those negotiations, that Lord Derby, Lord Carnarvon, and in the beginning Lord Salisbury, would have been only too willing to have given up fighting for the infamous cause of the Turk. It is, therefore, clear that Lord Beaconsfield could have carried his own Cabinet with him, as well as the English people, in the new and more glorious objects of defending the oppressed. Therefore I say that on him individually, as distinct from his predecessors, rests the responsibility of keeping this country in the old bad ways of supporting Turkish tyranny. On him rests the responsibility of having turned enlightened public opinion back into darkness, of having once more sunk the aroused public conscience into the mire of international immorality, of having sealed up those wells of truly human feelings which were then opened. It is to him, therefore, and to him only, we must ascribe one of the blackest pages of national immorality with which the annals of our history are darkened.

The next occasion on which Lord Beaconsfield favoured the country with an exposition of his policy was at the Guildhall Banquet on November 9, 1876. In this speech he repeated his Aylesbury fable as to the negotiations on a basis proposed by England, and he denounced, in most vehement terms, the conduct of

the heroic principality of Servia in entering upon a terribly unequal fight with the common oppressor of the Christian Slavs. He declared his firm intention to stand by the old policy of maintaining the independence and integrity of Turkey, and he wound up with a bellicose challenge to all the world on the part of England. "We have nothing to gain by war. We are essentially a non-aggressive power. There are no cities and no provinces that we desire to appropriate. . . . . But if the struggle comes, it should be recollected that there is no country so prepared for war as England—(loud and renewed applause)—because there is no country whose resources are so great. In a righteous cause—and I trust that England will never embark in a war except in a righteous cause, a cause that concerns her liberty, her independence, or her empire—England is not a country that will have to inquire whether she can enter into a second or a third campaign. In a righteous cause England will commence a fight that will not end until right is done. (Loud and prolonged applause.)"*

I hurry on from this to the time when, after severe pressure, he consented to send Lord Salisbury to the Constantinople Conference. When that Conference failed, it became evident that nothing was to be obtained from Turkey by persuasion, that she had determined to still go on oppressing in her old way, and that the only guarantee she was ready to give was a guarantee that had become as utterly

* *Daily News*, Nov. 10, 1876.

worthless as the oath of a convicted perjurer: the guarantee of her promises a hundred times renewed, and a hundred times broken. Under those circumstances, as united Europe did not intervene, Russia took up the cause of her oppressed brethren, and entered upon what the *Spectator* correctly described as the most just and necessary war of our time.* I do not intend here to overload my pages with arguments in favour of this opinion, for the controversy is too recent. I must content myself with saying that if ever a proposition appeared to me true, it is the proposition of the *Spectator* that the Russian war was a most just and a most necessary war. England did not intervene, but we have the strongest evidence—the evidence of Lord Beaconsfield's own words—that if he had had his way, she would have intervened, and the arms of England would have been joined to those of Turkey in preserving the intolerable horrors of Turkish rule. The opposition of his colleagues, and the fortunately still healthy public opinion of the country, stood in the way of this tremendous national crime. The force of the Liberal party had compelled his Foreign Secretary to write a despatch in which those Bulgarian horrors, the existence of which he had dismissed as vain delusions, as "coffee-house babble," were admitted to be founded on fact; those Circassians whom Lord Beaconsfield had described as innocent and peaceful agriculturists, were declared to be fiends of cruelty; and a demand was made that Chefket Pasha,

* April 28, 1877.

their ringleader, should be hanged. But for these circumstances we might have beheld the soldiers of England side by side with those of Turkey engaged in the unholy work of maintaining Turkish oppression. I need not dwell on the many incidents that took place during the progress of the war. Suffice it to say that in every point of her advance in her work of emancipation, Russia found herself thwarted by the English Prime Minister, and that her hand any day might have been stayed, had Lord Beaconsfield only obtained the assistance of some other European Power in carrying out his malign policy.

At last the Russians had succeeded in beating down the opposition of their enemy, complete victory had been achieved, and they were approaching within sight of Constantinople. We all know what took place then; how there were movements of English fleets and English soldiers, and for a moment we seemed to stand on the dizzy brink of war.

Who that has ever lived through it can forget that terrible time? There was no cause for which we could go to war except an unholy one. There was no interest of ours really threatened. There was no possible excuse which would bear the examination of a second why we should appeal to arms; and yet every day was filled with warlike rumours, and every morning we rose with the expectation of finding this country committed to a contest with Russia. There is a phenomenon in the climate of London at certain periods of the year, with which its inhabitants are too familiar. There are

days when the sky is clouded, the atmosphere heavily laden, and the light is drear and ghastly. Under the influence of such atmospheric surroundings, the mind is assailed by thoughts of some impending catastrophe —horrible, appalling, resistless, shapeless. Such was the moral condition of this country during the closing days of the war. We saw impending upon us a terrible doom. We knew not why it approached, or how it could be averted; but there it moved steadily step by step upon us, while we stood awaiting its advance in dazed and impotent horror.

This terrible time is marked by other scenes upon which we can look back with little less of shame or disgust. When the friends of sense, justice, and peace endeavoured to arrest the threatening catastrophe, Rowdyism was proclaimed king. The bibulous patron of the music hall, the unfledged medical student, the whole mass of ignorance, ruffianism, and folly, bore down any attempt of intelligence, or honesty, or humanity to make itself heard. Authority, meantime, looked on and applauded. When a wretched fellow in a music hall sang his more wretched rhymes, the highest authority in the realm was advised to send him a letter of congratulation on his patriotic verses. When a mob assailed a body of peaceful citizens of London in expressing their opinions, the ringleader was a Lord Mayor, who has since received his pitiful reward; and the Ministers were not ashamed to receive the representatives of rowdyism in private conclave. Nor was this the only form of strange combination

which that portentous season brought forth. The cynicism of the highest coalesced with the blood-thirstiness in the lowest classes; the levity of the richest with the darkness of the most needy. Pall Mall became as brutal as Ratcliffe Highway; and while our *pétroleuses* screached after their manner for slaughter, the ladies of fashion exercised their immemorial privilege of lowering their thumbs that the gashed might also die. It seemed as if the whole of the country had gone mad. Every bad national passion that can lie concealed in the heart of a nation was roused to fury: the hate of right, the love of wrong, the lust for blood, became the ruling frenzy. On this foul tide the barque of Lord Beaconsfield's fortunes floated with all sails set, triumphantly, proudly,—most appropriately. The lower a nation's mood, the higher rise such as he.

The Hebrew Premier had indeed reduced the Gentiles to an abyssmal depth of degradation. But Lord Beaconsfield wanted to raise himself still higher, and therefore it became necessary that he should drag down the English people still lower. He had changed the country from being the pole-star of the oppressed, to the friend, the ally, the chief support of a most guilty oppressor. The nation of Wilberforce had become the nation of Beaconsfield; the emancipator of the negro had been changed to the fellow-tyrant of the Bulgarian.* This, in all conscience, was trans-

* The similarity of the cause of the Bulgarian to that of the negro slave has been too much lost sight of in the Eastern controversy. The central point in the whole question—all the rest being merely subsidiary—is, that on the one side there were persons in a state of

formation sufficiently lamentable. But England, while thus interfering with the liberty of others, had, at least, preserved her own. That also Lord Beaconsfield set himself to restrict.

The reader will perhaps remember those extracts I made from Lord Beaconsfield's chief work during his Young England imposture. Lord Beaconsfield lays down in "Coningsby" over and over again the doctrine that Parliamentary institutions were ridiculous and effete, and that the true mode of government was through the monarch and the multitude.* One of the many advantages, as I have remarked in an early part

absolute servitude, and on the other side their masters. Some of the muddle-headed people, who took the side of Turkey, and, so doing, thought they were upholding the honour of England, would have been indignant if they had been asked whether they thought the maintenance of negro slavery would add to English glory. Yet the case of the Bulgarian was even stronger than that of the negro. Mr. Gladstone put this important part of the Liberal case well in one of his Essays. "Our duty," he wrote, "the duty of those with whom I sympathise, is to be true to our text such as it has been from the first, and to recollect that this question is, above all and before all things, the question of the subject races; of redeeming, from a servitude worse than that of the negro, a population twice that of the negroes ever held in slavery; and a population who, before the yoke was laid upon their necks, were our compeers, our equal competitors in the race of civilization."—"The Peace to Come," *Nineteenth Century*, iii. 212. And again: "Her domination over the subject races has been incurable, just as slavery was incurable; or (to take a vastly milder instance), just as Protestant ascendency in Ireland was incurable. The thing is incurable, but not the men who have to do with the thing. To make them curable, you have to take them out of a position which is false, and to leave them in a position which is true, sound, and normal. Let the daily power of the Turk in Bulgaria be destroyed, as the power of the slaveholder has been destroyed in every Christian country except one."—*Ibid.* 219.

* See *ante*, 232—234.

of this work, we have derived from the last Premiership of Lord Beaconsfield is that we have seen the realization in every-day life of some of the worst and wildest dreams of Mr. Disraeli's romances. I do not profess to know whether Lord Beaconsfield really believes in the "monarch and the multitude" as an abstract proposition. He had, when it suited his purpose, preached, as has been seen, the opposite doctrine of the sublimity of Parliament and the loftiness of its privileges. At this juncture, however, he found that the monarch and the multitude happened to be on his side, and, accordingly, the doctrine recommended itself immensely to that keen perception of his own interest which does duty with him for conviction. With his romancer's eye to dramatic effect, he was captured, too, by the idea of converting the dreams of his earlier years into world-moving facts. He could see before his eyes the historian of the future drawing that most wonderful picture of the novelist's dreams accomplished; and how his vain bosom has swelled before that prospect!

Thus came this new phase in our history, that we who had independent Parliaments, when no other country in Europe had dreamt of representative institutions, even in its highest aspirations after liberty,—that we who had kept that great institution sacred and unsullied in spite of a long succession of kings,—we, who had grown through freedom to be one of the greatest of empires,—we, who for centuries had been the pattern of popular liberty with all the world through

our Parliamentary institutions,—we, under the spell of our Oriental dictator, were taught to trample our representative institutions under foot. On April 16, 1878, the Chancellor of the Exchequer dismissed the House of Commons with the assurance that the situation was all tranquil, and that our legislators might go to their homes in the utmost security of mind. On the very following morning England learned that the Indian troops had been ordered to Malta! And by-and-by came a more flagrant breach of our constitutional liberties.

Well, we escaped the perils of a war with Russia in spite of everything that had been done to precipitate such a conflict. Then came the San Stefano Treaty. To that treaty the English Government at once raised objections. A mode of escape from the difficulty was proposed. It was accepted by all the other great powers, including Austria, whose interests are far more seriously threatened by a Russian advance in Turkey than are the interests of England. Again Lord Beaconsfield broke up the European concert, and again we stood face to face with the horrible contingency of an utterly causeless war. I am not going over the dreary negotiations which took place upon this difficulty created by the English Prime Minister. Suffice it to say that before the question was settled, two of the ablest and honestest of his colleagues had finally, in spite of the immense temptations to the contrary, separated themselves from any responsibility in Lord Beaconsfield's unholy enterprises.

The Berlin Congress was at last arranged, and then the question came by whom we should be represented. Those who knew Lord Beaconsfield's career were not at all astonished to learn that he himself had resolved to be one of the plenipotentiaries of England on the occasion. In his early days one of his favourite dreams had been to take part in a European Congress. In "Vivian Grey," in which under a fictitious name he describes his own longings and the achievements he was performing in imagination, the hero is described as ingeniously defeating the most elaborate schemes of a skilled and veteran diplomatist. In "Contarini Fleming," again, as I have shown in passages I have quoted from that work, he was playing the same part of a triumphant negotiator amid the councils of Europe. And now that the opportunity came of carrying those boyish dreams into realization, of course he seized upon it.

The cause which, according to themselves, the English delegates went to Berlin to represent, was the cause of the public law of Europe. The basis of all their objections to the proposals of Russia,—proposals backed by Europe,—the principle upon which they were ready to plunge this country into war, was that a European Council alone could modify the arrangement which a previous European Council had made. Their demand, therefore, all through was that, as the San Stefano Treaty materially modified the European agreement of 1856, the San Stefano Treaty in all and every part should be brought before another

European Council. What happened? One evening the whole country was startled by the intelligence published in a newspaper friendly to the Administration, that our delegates—the representatives of European law, the advocates, even to the extent of war, of every new modification in the Paris Treaty being submitted in its entirety to a European Council—had themselves made a secret and single-handed engagement before they had entered into the European Council at all, and that this engagement made the most serious changes in the provisions of the Paris Treaty. Everybody remembers well the candid answer which his lordship of Salisbury gave to the first question asked about this extraordinary arrangement when it appeared in the shape of a mere brief sketch. After a while the *Globe* was able to prove its words by the production of the entire agreement. Tricky answers could no longer be tried, and Europe therefore learnt that these people, who were talking of playing a thoroughly honest game, had gone into the Council of Europe with loaded dice, and cards up every sleeve.

The result of the Berlin Conference is known. The whole aim of our representatives there was to restore to the ruthless grasp of Turkey as many as possible of the unfortunate subjects whom Russia, after tremendous sacrifices of blood and money, had rescued; and everybody knows that, to the everlasting shame of our representatives, and also to the shame of our country, those efforts, to a considerable extent, pre-

vailed. Everybody knows, too, that glorying in their shame, the Ministry afterwards published a map in which they showed by colours the tract of territory which their efforts had succeeded in handing once more over to the ruthless oppressor.

But the strangest and most senseless phenomenon was yet to come. Just as the Council of Europe was about to break up, the people learned through the newspapers that the Ministry had undertaken, on their own responsibility, an additional burden, whose far-reaching consequences not even yet can any one foretell. For this act, again, we have to come back to the early imaginings of Lord Beaconsfield's fiction. In "Tancred" we find it laid down that England was, in time, to seek to become an Eastern Power, and that when she again helped Turkey she was to have Cyprus and the protectorate of Asia as her reward.*

* "Let the Queen of the English collect a great fleet, let her stow away all her treasure, bullion, gold plate, and precious arms; be accompanied by all her court and chief people, and transfer the seat of her empire from London to Delhi. There she will find an immense empire ready made, a first-rate army, and a large revenue. In the meantime I will arrange with Mehemet Ali. He shall have Bagdad and Mesopotamia, and pour the Bedoueen cavalry into Persia. I will take care of Syria and Asia Minor. The only way to manage the Afghans is by Persia and by the Arabs. We will acknowledge the Empress of India as our suzerain, and secure for her the Levantine coast. If she like, she shall have Alexandria as she now has Malta; it could be arranged. Your queen is young; she has an *avenir*. Aberdeen and Sir Peel will never give her this advice; their habits are formed. They are too old, too *rusés*. But, you see! the greatest empire that ever existed; besides which she gets rid of the embarrassment of her Chambers! and quite practicable; for the only difficult part, the conquest of India, which baffled Alexander, is all done!"—

It was much more important to Lord Beaconsfield that again the future historian should be able to point to this dramatic coincidence of his career, than that the interests of this great empire should be most seriously imperilled. To this being "reckless of all things save his own prosperity," what is England, what is Europe, what is the whole world, provided incense be offered to the god of self whom alone he adores? Here, again, was a trampling upon the parliamentary institutions of this country which not the wildest dreamer would have ever thought possible. Here, again, was an example of the manner in which our Ministry understood their position as the advocates of the law of Europe!

I do not intend to stop on my way to discuss at any length the Anglo-Turkish Convention. Suffice it to say that to my mind even the advocates of the Ministry themselves have already discovered that the Anglo-Turkish Convention, so far as it might have conferred any benefit on this country, has already been tried and found wanting; and that, so far as it may lay on us heavy responsibility, it still unhappily remains. The island of Cyprus—the acquisition of which was supposed to be such a wondrous exploit—has proved to be but a poor gain, and the promised reforms in Asia Minor, which were to be the

Tancred, new ed., 263. And with regard to Cyprus—"the English want Cyprus, and they will take it as compensation. . . . . The English will not do the business of the Turks again for nothing."—*Ibid.* 237-8.

basis of our accepting the protectorate, have yet to come.*

The Treaty of Berlin I cannot stay to discuss. In my opinion, that Treaty is practically dead already. As long, of course, as the present Ministry are in power, it will be their policy to maintain that document; but he must indeed be a strange being who can suppose that the barrier of the Balkans can keep apart the Bulgarian people—similar in race, in religion, in memories,—the one free, the other still enslaved; and it appears to me that the Ministerial triumph over humanity in the transformation of the San Stefano Treaty into the Berlin Treaty, had not even the small compensation of a triumph over Russia. As Mr. Gladstone has justly pointed out, the greatest barrier to a Russian advance on Constantinople are independent states. But we have taken the precaution to

* Since I wrote those lines, events have occurred which still further confirm the truth of those views. The Turks themselves, and Lord Salisbury and Sir Austen Layard confess—unwittingly, probably, and not, of course, willingly—that all hopes of reform in Asia are illusory without the aid of English money: and money from England the Turks won't get. What a commentary on the war-passion of last year are the events connected with the Rhodope grant! The strongest Ministry of our generation could not obtain from a Turcophile and most favourable House of Commons a few thousands for starving Turks. And a private subscription, headed by the Premier, the Foreign Secretary, and the Rothschilds, ended in a killing frost and a few thousands! And for this people, for whom we would not subscribe a tithe of the money sent to China, our light-hearted Ministerialists were calling on us a short time ago to sacrifice millions of English money, as well as thousands of English lives! If there had been a war, where would England, where would Lord Beaconsfield be now? Heavens! what an escape we have had!

destroy one of these barriers, and have left still an enslaved Sclav population on which Russia can intrigue against the continuance of the peace of Turkey.

On Tuesday, July 16, Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury made their entrance into London. The crowd which was gratified by such poor trickery in diplomacy, and by the acquisition of a miserable and useless little island, and a still more useless protectorate, held high holiday, and the English Plenipotentiaries found before them a decorated platform and multitudes enthusiastically cheering them. "Imagine," writest he *Daily Telegraph* – fit chronicler of such a day!—"a crimson-covered gallery built up against the western wall, and seeming to rise out of a bank of bloom, with here and there a palm or fern to serve as a foil to the splendour of colour. Fancy the lamp-posts made into things of beauty by spirals of flowers and leaves. Picture tall palms lifting their graceful forms from masses of other flowers and ferns. Think of the platform bordered with plants in beds, looking as natural as though a supernatural gardener by 'so potent art' had made them grow there. Imagine orange trees shedding around light reflected from their leaves of lustrous green; then more ferns and flowers crowning and glorifying the little wooden offices (!), erst as prosaic in appearance as in use (!)"; and so on. "When . . . the bell," says our writer, describing another incident, "announced the approach of the train, the whole station, from the crimson gallery, crowded with rank and fashion, to

the farthest platform filled with Greenwich passengers, and to the highest hotel window, with its row of heads, woke up to demonstrative life. Then, too, the usual exclamations indicative of relieved suspense were heard on every hand—nay, not the usual exclamations. People did not say to one another, referring to the train, 'Here she comes!' nor, speaking of its passengers, with a comprehensiveness that took in even the stoker, 'Here they come!' The remark was, 'Here *he* comes!' and there could be no mistake about the pronoun. As the train glided alongside the crimson platform, every eye searched for *him*. Where was *he?* Eager eyes watched every opening door, till, at last, a half-score of equally eager hands were seen thrust forward to help the descent of a gentleman wearing a long grey travelling coat. 'There he is!' . . . Men started up, hat in hand, and pushed their way among the gathering, shouting mass on the platform, anxious for a near view of the noble Earl, and hoping, perhaps, to grasp his hand. Ladies even came forward, under escort, with a like object, and it seemed at one time as though the reception would embarrass by its exceeding warmth. . . . As for the people on the platform, they surrounded and followed the vehicle, cheering as they went, and so passed through the archway. But their applause was only as a river, which, rushing between its banks, becomes lost in the ocean. The multitude outside gave voice together, and swallowed up the stream of cheers on

which floated into their sight the hero of the Berlin Peace."

It is needless to follow the enthusiastic account much further; suffice it to say that Lord Beaconsfield met with a similar greeting on his way to Downing Street. The "cheering came down like thunder." Four "voices from north, south, east, and west converged in a national and Trafalgar Square chorus." The "compliment" was "one of tremendous import," and so on.

This picture is certainly of all the pictures in human history one of the strangest, if not the saddest. Here were these multitudes of free English Christians cheering the man who had given back more than a million of Christians to the most degrading slavery, as if he had conferred an everlasting honour upon the name of England, and had most at heart the interests of Christendom. To those benighted beings, the acquisition of Cyprus and the protectorate of Asia Minor were the great interests of the hour; but to the future historian a little episode, of which these cheering multitudes knew nothing, will probably appear the most interesting.

Again we quote our eloquent authority: "One incident . . . must be recorded. Sir Moses Montefiore, at the advanced age of ninety-five, had come out to meet the Premier. Introduced by Lord Henry Lennox, the Prime Minister grasped him warmly by the hand, and seemed delighted with the kindly veteran's welcome."

Certainly an "incident" that "must be recorded"; for, of the many during that strange day, it was the incident most significant. By that small scene the meaning of this apotheosis of Lord Beaconsfield by a Christian people is written in letters of light. That day represented the triumph, not of England, not of an English policy, not of an Englishman. It was the triumph of Judæa, a Jewish policy, a Jew. The Hebrew, who drove through those crowds to Downing Street, was dragging the whole of Christendom behind the Juggernaut car over the rights of the Turkish Christians, of which he was the charioteer.

"I have brought you," he said at Downing Street, "peace with honour." I think I am anticipating the verdict of a very near posterity when I say that what Lord Beaconsfield that day brought England was war with shame.

And here I leave him for the present. Such then as I have described—in language of severity, I admit, but in the language of strict truth—is the man to whom England entrusts her destinies. It appears to me that I have proved that if ever there were a man unworthy of that lofty position, it is Lord Beaconsfield. It appears to me that I have proved beyond a possibility of doubt in any reasonable mind, that throughout his whole career his sole absorbing thought has been himself, and that to carry out his own advancement he has sacrificed every principle which men hold dear. I have proved, I think, that all through his life he has been fulfilling the candid utterances of his

boyhood, and has been playing with every feeling, with every public man, with every party, with every interest of England, with the recklessness of the foreigner to whom all these things were but as worthless cards in the great game of ambition he was playing. I do not judge this man from the standpoint of the Pharisee. I know that life is thorny and man is vain; that the politician is subject to even stronger temptations than most other men, and that before these temptations even the purest of mind and the most honest of purpose have frequently fallen. If, therefore, in the course of Lord Beaconsfield's life, I could point to nothing worse than occasional though great errors and misdeeds, I should be ready to pass a more favourable verdict upon him. Some of the most splendid figures in political history are besmirched all over. When I bow down before the mighty genius and the great services of Mirabeau, the pale ghost of Sophie Le Monnier rises up to denounce him. There comes back to me the memory of the dirty gold received probably for dirty services in the garden of the Tuileries; there come back his hundred other crimes; but I recall at the same time one thing in the man that—if it cannot destroy—at least chastens our indignation. The great French Tribune, amid the mire of his follies, his excesses, and his crimes, had at least some genuineness in him. He was, with all his faults, capable of sincere conviction, and when animated by that conviction he was as pure, as sincere, and as high of purpose as even the man who had passed from the cradle to the grave

without one great sin. But in Lord Beaconsfield I find no such redeeming feature. That whole character is complete in its selfishness, that whole career is uniform in its dishonesty. Throughout his whole life I do not find even on a single occasion a generous emotion, one self-sacrificing act, a moment of sincere conviction—except that of the almighty perfection of himself. I find him uniform in all his dealings with his fellow-man, and behind every word he utters I can only see the ever-vigilant custodian of his own interests. And it is this perfect uniformity in his character and career that most estranges me. We know that too often in the course of a man's life his original nature is warped. Disappointment, suffering, unresisted temptations, harden many a heart that was once soft, lower many a nature that was once high. But even in their degradation these men carry the relics of their better past. As the completest wreck recalls most vividly the stately ship, the wildest ruin the lofty mansion, the very recklessness of such men's vice is the most eloquent testimony to the elevation of their early strivings. But Lord Beaconsfield is the same from the beginning; as he is in old age, as he was in middle age, so he was in youth. His maturity without virtues is the natural sequel to his youth without generous illusions. There is throughout the same selfishness—calm, patient, unhasting, unresting. Such a man the myriads of this mighty Empire accept as chief ruler; for such a man millions of pure hearts beat with genuine emotion; to such a man it is given to sway by his

single will your fortunes and mine, and even those of the countless generations yet to come. Which shall a near posterity most wonder at—the audacity of the impostor, or the blindness of the dupe?—the immensity of the worship, or the pettiness of the idol?

"Such is the world. Understand it, despise it, love it; cheerfully hold on thy way through it with thy eyes on higher loadstars."*

* Carlyle: Miscellanies, v. 126. Cagliostro.

INDEX

Aberdeen, Earl of, offers G. Smythe office, 221. Offered an alliance by Russell, 415. Refuses, 416. Premier, 478. Asked by Russell to supersede Newcastle, 492. Defeated, and resigns, *ib.* Sacrificed for blunders in Crimea, 500-501.

Abyssinia, expedition to, 577.

Achmet Aga at Perustitza, 631.

Achmet Aga Hadji, one of the heroes of the Bulgarian atrocities, 622-3.

Akroyd, Mr. E., on condition of Halifax, 358.

Agriculturists, interests of, strongly attacked by Lord Beaconsfield, 65-6; and vehemently defended by Lord Beaconsfield, 75.

"Alarcos" published, 200. Analysed, 200-201.

Albert, Prince, rebukes opposition to Palmerston, 499-500.

Alberoni, object of Lord Beaconsfield's early admiration, 25.

"Alroy" shows influence of Miss D'Israeli, 2. Allusion in, to Lord Beaconsfield's travels, 18. Published, 26. Its character, *ib.*

Alsace, 387.

Alvanley, Lord, fights a duel with Morgan O'Connell, 106-7.

America, civil war in, 535.

"Angela Pisani" published, 224. Character of, *ib.*

"Anastasius," influence on Lord Beaconsfield, 598.

Andrassy, Count, issues Note on Turkey, 617. On English rejection of Berlin Memorandum, 619.

Anglo-Turkish, The, Convention, 666-8.

Annual Parliaments demanded in National Petition, 181.

Anti-Corn-Law League position in 1846, 280. Revived, 425.

Annual Register quoted, 365, 393, 479, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 500, 501, 502, 503, 512, 513, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 522, 524, 534, 535, 537, 539, 540, 541, 545, 546.

Ashley, Lord (Earl of Shaftesbury), appearance in 1837, 158-9. An opponent of Jewish Emancipation, 379.

Ashley, Mr. E., on Bulgarian atrocities, 620-21.

Ashworth, Mr. H., quotes Cobden on Peel, 285; on Protection and Free Trade, 358; on condition of Bolton, *ib.* Quotes Cobden's speech in '52, 425-6.

Asia Minor, Protectorate of, inconsistent with Lord Beaconsfield's speech in 1841, 205-6. English protectorate of, 666-7.

Assisi, Francis de, marriage with Queen Isabella, 365.

Austria annexes Cracow, 365. Defended by Lord Beaconsfield, 392. Intervenes between Russia and England, 495. Requested by Cabinet Ministers to assist in putting down Bosnian insurrection, 616-17. Issues Andrassy Note, 617; and joins in Berlin Memorandum, 618.

Avrat-Alan, condition of, during

Bulgarian atrocities, as described by MacGahan, 629; and by Baring, 640.
Aylesbury, meeting at, attended by Lord Beaconsfield, 64. Scene of an agricultural dinner, 72; Lord Beaconsfield at, contrasted with Lord Beaconsfield at Marylebone, 76-7. Lord Beaconsfield's speech at, 648-53.
Ayrton, Rt. Hon. A. S., attacks Lord Beaconsfield's introduction of Queen's name, 593.
Aziz-Pasha leads the massacre at Perustitza, 631-3.

Baines, Mr. E., proposes reduction of franchise, 543.
Ballot supported by Lord Beaconsfield, 57, 59. Again supported by Lord Beaconsfield, 65. Again supported by Lord Beaconsfield, 68. Dropped by Lord Beaconsfield, 78-9. Proposed by Grote, 181. Opposed by Lord Beaconsfield, *ib.*
Balkans, condition of villages in, during Bulgarian atrocities, 625.
Baker, Rev. Mr. (of Addington), receives Maunday Thursday letter, 589.
Bandiera Brothers, 263.
Bank Charter Act suspended, 371, 513.
Bankes, Mr., votes against Peel, 357. Referred to by *Morning Chronicle*, 391.
Baring, F. T., appearance in 1837, 156.
Baring, Sir T., resigns High Wycombe, 44. Receives letter from J. Hume, 49-50.
Baring, Mr., opposes Gladstone's proposed raising of £2,000,000, 487.
Baring, Mr. Walter, commissioned to inquire into Bulgarian atrocities, 639. His report, 639-46. Statement contrasted with Mr. MacGahan's, *ib.*
Basevi, George or Joshua, uncle of Lord Beaconsfield, 1.
Bashi-Bazouks, employment of, denounced by Sir H. Elliot, 621; and by several English Consuls, 622-3. At Otluk-Kui, 630; at Perustitza, 631-35; at Batak, 642.
Bass, Mr. M. T., M.P., member of Westminster Reform Club, 100.
Batak, the massacre at, during Bulgarian atrocities, described by MacGahan, 634-8; and by Baring, 641-3; and by Schuyler, 641. The rising, 644-6.
Bath contested by Mr. Roebuck as Radical, 46-7. Rejects Mr. Roebuck in 1837, 161.
Bazardjik, the massacre at, 643. State of, during Bulgarian atrocities, 622.
"Beaconsfield" a character in "Vivian Grey," 34.
Beaconsfield residence of Burke, 367.
Beales, Mr. E., M.A., member of Westminster Reform Club, 100.
Beaumanoir stands for Belvoir Castle in "Coningsby," 236.
Beckford of Fonthill, described by Lord Beaconsfield, 16. Said by Lord Beaconsfield to have admired "Contarini Fleming," 19.
Belgrade, English Consul at, 620.
Bentinck, Lord George, anxious to get Lord Beaconsfield into Parliament, 77-8. Helps to organize opposition to Peel, 297-8. Opposes second reading of Corn Law Bill, 302. Worthless speech extravagantly eulogised by Lord Beaconsfield, 302-3. Supports first reading of Coercion Bill, 309. Raises a debate on a phrase of Peel's, 310. Advised by Lord Beaconsfield to oppose second reading of Coercion Bill, 322, although he had vehemently supported introduction, *ib.* Accepts the advice, 323. His excuse examined, 323-4. Resolves to determine the opposition by a violent speech, 326. Accordingly attacks supporters of Peel in coarse language, *ib.* Accuses Peel of treachery to Canning and of falsehood, 326-7. Were those charges suggested by Lord Beaconsfield? 328-32. His attack on Peel a mean party move, 332. Answered by Peel, 332-3, 345-54. His attack unanimously condemned, 354-5; yet persists in renewing it, 355. Opposes abolition of protection on sugar, 360-61. De-

feated, 361. Takes seat on front Opposition bench, 362. Proposes counter scheme for dealing with Ireland, 363. Again defeated, 364. Attacks Palmerston's Spanish policy, *ib.*; and policy towards Russia, 365. Opposes all economical reforms, 366. In favour of Jewish emancipation, 375. Requested by Protectionists to abstain from voting, *ib.*; but speaks and votes, 376. Resigns leadership of Protectionists, 376-7; and leaves place on front Opposition bench, 377. Conduct contrasted with that of Lord Beaconsfield, 377-381. Was Lord Beaconsfield trying to cut him out? 371, 388. Death, 390. Lord Beaconsfield's conduct towards, 437-8.

Bentincks, The, vote against Peel, 356.

Beresford, Major, referred to by *Morning Chronicle*, 391.

Beresford-Hope, Mr., fellow-student of G. Smythe, 219.

Berlin. The Memorandum issued, 618; proposals, *ib.*; rejected, 619. Congress at, 664-7. Treaty, 668-9.

Bernal, Mr., appearance in 1837, 159.

Berkeley, Mr. G., in 1837, 160. Proposes a five-shilling import duty, 406.

Beverley represented by Mr. Hogg, 261.

Birmingham disturbed by Chartists, 182. Represented by Mr. Bright, 596.

Bismarck (Prince), on English rejection of Berlin Memorandum, 619.

Blanc, Louis, description by, of Carrel-Girardin duel, 87.

Blessington, Countess of, youth and married life, 10-11. Companion of Count D'Orsay, 11-12. Celebrated hostess, 13-14. Her guests, *ib.* Entertains Lord Beaconsfield, 15-17. One of Lord Beaconsfield's early teachers, 228.

Blessington, Earl of, husband of Lady Blessington, 11.

Blunt, H. W., signatory of Lord Beaconsfield's baptismal certificate, 9.

Bohn, Mr. H. G., gives account of Miss D'Israeli, 3-4.

Bolton, condition in '42, 358.

Bolingbroke, Lord, quoted in "Vivian Grey," 32; and frequently in real life, 61. Lord Beaconsfield compares himself to, 121-2. Eulogised for deserting Tory principles in office, 123. His writings really Liberal, 124. Parallel between his religious unscrupulousness and Lord Beaconsfield's, 274-5.

Bonham, Mr., accused by Lord Beaconsfield of connection with Despard's Plot, 265-6. Charge shown by Peel unfounded, 266.

Bosnia, Insurrection in, beginning of Eastern Question, 616. The Andrassy Note, 617.

Bradenham House, Bucks, taken by I. D'Israeli, 44.

Bright, Mr. John, in 1837, 162. In the Anti-Corn-Law League, 280. On condition of Sheffield, 358. Attacked by Lord Beaconsfield, 386. Contemptuously replies, 386-7. Again attacked, 387. On tactics of Lord Beaconsfield in 1852, 435; on Lord Beaconsfield's first Budget, 439. On Villiers' motion, 460. Denounces Palmerston, 498. Opinions on armies supported by Lord Beaconsfield, 536. Accuses Lord Beaconsfield of defending assassination in "Revolutionary Epick," 541-2. The result, 542-4. Objects to simultaneous discussion on Lord Beaconsfield's Resolution and Reform Bill, 555. On Lord Beaconsfield's Irish policy, 577. Denounces Lord Beaconsfield's use of Queen's name, 595-6. The reply, 596.

Bristow, Col., nominator of Colonel Grey, 63.

Brooks's Club, Lord Alvanley's requisition to, 106-7.

Brotherton, Mr., in 1837, 160.

Brougham, Lord, attacked by "Runnymede," 145-6. In 1837, 162.

Brownlow, Mr., on Catholic Question, 347.

Brummel, 241.

Brunnow, Baron, Russian Minister, 505.

Buck, Mr., votes against Peel, 357.
Buckingham, Duke of (the late), presides at meeting at Aylesbury, 73.
"Buckinghamshire, History of." *See* Sheahan.
Bucks contested by Lord Beaconsfield, 367. Associations with Burke and Hampden, *ib.*
Bucks Gazette contains letters of J. Hume, etc., 50. Attacks Lord Beaconsfield, 50-52. Comments on result of election, 54-55. Contains speech of Lord Beaconsfield, 62-64. Again attacks Lord Beaconsfield, 64.
Bucks Herald supports Lord Beaconsfield, 50. Approves his oratory, 52. Speech of Lord Beaconsfield in, 73-6. Quoted, 369-71. Reports Lord Beaconsfield's speech, 546-7.
Bulgaria, massacres in, 619. Reported in *Daily News*, 620. Subject of questions in the House of Commons, 620-21; 625-6. Atrocities described by English Consuls, 622-5.
Bulgarians, treatment of, described by Consul Reade, 625; by MacGahan, 628-38; by Schuyler, 638-9; and by Baring, 639-46; effect of story on English public, 646.
Buller, Mr. C., in 1837, 160.
Buller, Sir J. Y., proposes vote against Ministry, 184. Votes against Peel, 357.
Bulwer, E. L., *see* Lytton, Lord (the late).
Bulwer, Sir H., expelled from Madrid, 387.
Bunsen, Chevalier, blamed by Lord Beaconsfield, 387.
Burdett, Sir F., writes a letter in favour of Lord Beaconsfield, 48. Appearance in 1837, 159. Changed from Radical to Tory, *ib.* Subscribes to Spottiswoode Subscription, 164. Attacks O'Connell, 165. Attacked in return, *ib.* Motion for Catholic Relief, 346.
Burke, Edmund, treatment of, by Whigs, denounced by Lord Beaconsfield, 64. Eulogised in "Vindication," 121. Associations with Bucks, 367. Destined to receive title of Lord Beaconsfield, 626-7.
Burrell, Sir C., votes against Peel, 356.
Byron, Lord, as portrayed in "Venetia," 198-200.

Cadurcis, character in "Venetia," 198; 599.
Cagliostro, as described by Carlyle, 675.
Cairns, Earl, in 1837, 162.
Calne represented by Mr. Lowe, 587.
Camberwell (St. Giles'), compound householders in, 565.
Cambridge University attended by G. Smythe, Lord J. Manners, Lord Lyttelton, Lord Penzance, and Mr. A. B. Hope, 218-19. Influenced by the Tractarian movement, 227.
Campbell, Mr., denounces Lord Beaconsfield as unpatriotic, 513.
Canada discussed by Lord Beaconsfield, 537-8.
Canning, George, quoted by Peel, 266. Relations with Peel alluded to by Lord Beaconsfield, 267-8. Peel's reply, 268-9. Said by Bentinck to have been hunted to death by Peel, 326-7. Peel's reply, 332-3. Story rehashed by Lord Beaconsfield, 333-45. Extravagantly eulogised by Lord Beaconsfield, 341; though formerly severely satirized, 342-3. Peel's reply, 345-54.
Canning, Lord, Viceroy of India, attacked by Lord Beaconsfield, 511-12.
Canning, Mrs., anger at adhesion of her husband's friends to Wellington, 328.
Canterbury represented by G. Smythe, 219.
Carabas, Marquess of, character in "Vivian Grey," 31.
Cardwell, Lord, Memoirs of Peel quoted, 210.
Carington, Lord (the 2nd). *See* Smith, Hon. R.
Carlisle, Earl of, *see* Lord Morpeth.
Carlyle, Thomas, on Cagliostro, 675.
Carnarvon, Earl of, resigns, 556. On household suffrage, 557, 561.
Carrel, Armand, duel with Girardin, 87.

Castlereagh, Lord, ridiculed in "Coningsby," 232.
Catholics, appealed to by Lord Beaconsfield against Peel, 276. Peel accused of inconsistency towards, 340. Accused by Lord Beaconsfield of conspiracy with Ritualists, 588, 589-90.
Cavendish, Mr., elected for Bucks, 370. Commented on by Lord Beaconsfield, 370-71.
Cayley, Mr., opposes increase of Malt Tax, 485.
Cecil, Lord Robert. *See* Marquis of Salisbury.
Chamberlain, Mr. J., compared to reformer of 1832, 46. A Liberal, though no Whig, 62.
Chandos, Marquis of (afterwards Duke of Buckingham), leader of the agriculturists, 71-2; the hero of an Aylesbury dinner, 73. Eulogised by Lord Beaconsfield, 75-6. A friend of Lord Beaconsfield, 78. Retires from office in '41, 209; and leads opposition against Peel in '46, 286.
Charles Albert condemned by Lord Beaconsfield, 392.
Charles I. celebrated by Lord J. Manners, 216-17.
Charter, *see* National Petition.
Chartists present National Petition, 179. Lord Beaconsfield's attitude towards, 179-182. Create disturbances, 182; hold convention, *ib.* Again discussed by Lord Beaconsfield, 183. Motion on prisoners, 184.
Cheetham, Mr., violently denounces Peel, 400-401.
Chefket Pasha, the leader of the massacre at Bazardjik, 643. Denounced by Lord Derby, 657-8.
Chelmsford, Lord (Sir F. Thesiger), defeats Russell Ministry, 418. Declaration on Protection in '52, 429. Opposes emancipation of Jews, 490. Dismissed by Lord Beaconsfield, 578.
Chettinge, English Consul in, 620.
China, war with, 503, 505, 510.
Christianity, relations to Judaism according to Lord Beaconsfield, 381-384.
Christopher, Mr., opposes Peel's Corn Bill in 1841, 210. Votes against Peel, 357. On restoration of Protection, 428-9, 446. Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, 428-9.
Chubb, Rev. Mr., Vicar of Hughenden, 608.
Church, Irish, reduction of, advocated by Lord Beaconsfield, 79-80. and condemned by Lord Beaconsfield, 90; denounced by Lord Beaconsfield, 253-4; defended by Lord Beaconsfield, 580 *et seq.*
Circassians as described by Lord Beaconsfield, 621; and by others, 621-5.
Clarendon, Earl of (the late), satirized by Lord Beaconsfield, 504.
Cleveland, character in "Vivian Grey," 37.
Cobden, R., in 1837, 162. Doctrines practically adopted by Peel in 1842, 208. Painful scene with Peel, 261-2. Scene alluded to by Lord Beaconsfield in 1845, 261; and in 1846, 301; Speech on the allusion, 301-2. Supports Maynooth Grant, 274. On Peel's position in '46, 285. In the Anti-Corn-Law League, 280. Opposes Coercion Bill, 306. Uses a phrase which originates a stormy scene, 306-7. Repudiates Lord Beaconsfield's interpretation of his words, 309. Attacked by Lord Beaconsfield, 386. Contemptuously replies, *ib.* Again attacked, 387. On tactics of Lord Beaconsfield in 1852, 435. On Lord Beaconsfield's treatment of Peel, 451-2. On Villiers' motion, 460. Criticises Lord Beaconsfield's Budget, 471. Denounces Palmerston, 498. Denounces Lord Beaconsfield for duplicity on question of Protection, 403-5. Again denounces Lord Beaconsfield for duplicity, 406-7. Denounces Derby Ministry, 425-6. On tactics of Lord Beaconsfield in '52, 435. Proposes vote of censure on China war, 505.
Cockburn, Sir A., on policy of Lord Beaconsfield in '52, 433.
Coercion Bill (Irish) introduced by Peel, 249. Discussed by Lord Beaconsfield, 249-50. Introduced by Peel, 303. Blocks Corn Law

Bill, 304-6. Debate on introduction of, 305. Causes *rapprochement* between Protectionist and Irish members, 305-6. Passes first reading, 309. Second reading opposed by Bentinck, 323. Debate on second reading, 324. Rejected, 355. Introduced by Lord John Russell, 372.
Colchester addressed by Lord J. Manners, 446.
Commons, *see* House of Commons.
Conference, description of, in "Contarini Fleming," 22-3; at Vienna, 494; at Berlin, 618.
Congress, *see* Conference.
"Coningsby" published, 229. Description of Lord Monmouth, *ib.*; of Mr. Rigby, *ib.* Contrasted with "Vanity Fair," 229-30. Eulogises the powerful while satirising the feeble, 230-31. Flattering portrait of Lord Lonsdale as Lord Eskdale, 231. The Estate again, *ib.* Similarity of ideas in "Vindication," *ib.* Satirises Tories of Liverpool's time, and denounces their doctrines, 231-2. Eulogises Peel, 332. Calls him a distinguished personage, *ib.*; a great man, *ib.*; and acquits him of intrigue, *ib.* Introduces Sidonia, who proclaims the divinity of youth, *ib.*; universal genius of Jews, *ib.*; and vehemently denounces Parliamentary institutions, 232-3. Those ideas realised, 233. Divine Right taught, 233-4. Introduction of the Beaumanoir family, 234. Abject flattery of the nobility, 234-6; even of those who are enemies of the author, 236. Proposes the restoration of the maypole and of almsgiving, 237. Jumbling of sacred and frivolous themes, 238-9. The State to be saved by its youth, 239. Young England gospel summarised, *ib.* Criticised by Thackeray, 240-41. A ridiculous love story, 240. *Fortnightly Review* on contradiction of estimate on Lord J. Russell in, with other estimates in other works, 258-9. On relations of Canning and Peel, 343. On relations of Jews and Mohammedans, 610-11. Ideas carried out in Lord Beaconsfield's second Premiership, 661-3.
"Coningsby Harry," hero of "Coningsby," 233-4.
Conservatives oppose Russell's Education Grant. 179. Support Protection in 1841 election, 202.
Constantinople, Conference at, 656.
"Contarini Fleming" published, 19. Its purpose, *ib.* Describes under hero Lord Beaconsfield's own position, 19-20. Its character, 20. Description of a boyish ambition, *ib.*; a schoolboy fight, 21; a Court intrigue, *ib.*; and a conference, 22. A splendid passage, 22-3. A strange prophecy, 23. Contrast of hero's position and surroundings, 23-5. Strange likeness to Lord Beaconsfield's own position in England, 25. Description of Eastern travels, *ib.* A love story, 25-6. Dreams realised in Lord Beaconsfield's Premiership, 664.
Corfu. Bandiera Brothers in, 263.
Corn-Law, Abolition of, proposed by Mr. Villiers, 184. Opposed by Lord Beaconsfield, *ib.* Reduction on duty, a Whig proposal in 1841, 205. Modifications proposed by Peel, 208. Those modifications proved a step in direction of free-trade by Peel's speeches, 208-9; by those of his opponents, 299-10; and by his "Memoirs," 210-11; yet supported by Lord Beaconsfield, 212-13. Denounced by Russell, 280. Position of Russell and Peel towards, contrasted, 281-3. Bill to repeal, introduced by Peel, 297; discussed by Lord Beaconsfield, 298-300; opposed by Bentinck, 302; second reading carried, 303; and third in Commons, 320; and second in Lords, *ib.*
Courtown, Lord, character in "Vivian Grey," 37.
Cox, Mr., exposes at Taunton Lord Beaconsfield's early Radicalism, 134.
Coxe on Peerage Bill, 120.
Cracow annexed by Austria, 365.
Cranborne, Viscount. *See* Marquis of Salisbury.

Crimean war, conduct of English Opposition during, 480-81 *et seq.*
Croker, J. W., satirized in "Coningsby," 229, 230-31.
Curiosities of literature quoted, 4, 6.
Curteis, Mr., defends Lord Beaconsfield, 252.
Cyprus, occupation of, inconsistent with speech of Lord Beaconsfield in 1841, 205-6. Annexation of, 666-7.

Daily News on Lord Beaconsfield's first appointment as Chancellor of the Exchequer, 423; gives report of Bulgarian massacres, 620; corroborated by English Consuls, 622-5. Sends MacGahan to Bulgaria, 627. His letters, 628-38. Accounts contrasted with Mr. Baring's, 639-46. Reports speech of Lord Beaconsfield, 656.
Daily Telegraph on Lord Beaconsfield's entry in London after Berlin Treaty, 669-71.
Dante, Lord Beaconsfield compares himself to, 85.
Dartmouth, Earl of, letter of Lord Beaconsfield to, 583.
Day, Mr., guest of Mr. W. Meredith, 3.
Denison, Mr. B., abandons Protection, 287.
Denmark, Lord Beaconsfield on, 410.
Deepdene, rendezvous of Young England party, 598.
Derby, Earl of (the late), appearance in 1837, 156. Deserts the Liberals, 162. Takes no notice of Lord Beaconsfield's maiden speech, 175. Styled by Lord Beaconsfield Rupert of Debate, 262. Resigns, 286. Asked to form Government, 415. Fails to obtain support of Peelites, 416. Not inclined to accept Lord Beaconsfield's services, 416-17. Applies for assistance to Mr. Gladstone, 417. Abandons attempt to form Government, *ib.* Premier, 423. Selection of colleagues, *ib.* On Act of 1846, 426-7. Announces policy of his Government, 427. Election addresses of his colleagues, 428. On Lord Beaconsfield's first Budget, 440. Speech contrasted with Lord Beaconsfield's, 442. Defeated, 476 Character of his Ministry, 476-7. Conduct as Opposition leader during Crimean war, 480-81. Opposes emancipation of Jews, 490. Asked to form Government, 492. Proposes coalition with Palmerston, Gladstone, etc., 492-3. Offers to substitute Palmerston for Disraeli as leader, 493. Again Premier, 516; and again, 550. Intentions on Reform as described by Lord Beaconsfield, 552. Announces his abandonment of £6 Reform Bill, 556; and resignation of three ministers, 556-7. Resigns, 578.
Derby, Earl of (the present), in 1837, 162; on Protection, 445-6. "Revolutionary Epick" dedicated to, 544. Proposes amendment to Mr. Gladstone's Irish Church resolutions, 583. Sir H. Elliot's despatch to, 621; and despatches of various Consuls on Bulgarian atrocities, 622-5. On negotiations after Berlin Memorandum, 649-51.
Despard, Plot of, 265-7.
D'Esterre killed by O'Connell in a duel, 106.
Devon represented by Mr. Buck, 357.
Dilke, Sir C., compared to reformer of 1832, 46. A Liberal, though no Whig, 62.
"Diplomatic Transactions in Central Asia" plagiarised by Lord Beaconsfield, 600.
Disraeli, Benjamin, Earl of Beaconsfield, uncertainty as to date of birth, 1; and place, *ib.* Parentage, *ib.*; and relatives, 2-3. Descent, 3-5. Initiated into covenant of Abraham, 6. Baptized, 7-9. Not sent to a fashionable school, 8; 10. Early dreams, 10. A guest of Lady Blessington, *ib.* On Count D'Orsay, 13. Character of the company he met, 13-14. Its influence upon him, 14. A great dandy, 15-16. Publishes "Vivian Grey," 15. Manner and conversation in youth, 15-17. Publishes second part of "Vivian Grey," 17; "Popanilla," *ib.*; and

"Young Duke," *ib.* Goes on foreign tour, 18. Its influence, *ib.* Publishes "Contarini Fleming," 19. Describes his own position under the name of the hero, 19-20. Character of the book, 20. Description of boyish ambition, *ib.*; of a schoolboy fight, 21; of a Court intrigue, *ib.*; and of a conference, 22. A fine passage, 22-3. A strange prophecy, 23. Contrast of hero's position and surroundings, 23-4. Strange likeness to Lord Beaconsfield's own position in England, 25. Description of Eastern travels. *ib.* A love story, 25-6. Meets Lord Melbourne, 23-4. Publishes "Alroy," 26. Character of book, *ib.* "Vivian Grey" analysed, 27-42. The key to his character, 41. Publishes "Rise of Iskander," 41. "Infernal Marriage," *ib.* "Ixion in Heaven," *ib.* Determines on a political career, 43. Contests High Wycombe, 44; as a Radical, 46-7. Obtains letters from Joseph Hume, 47; O'Connell and Bulwer Lytton, 47-49; and Burdett, 48. Hume's letter withdrawn, 49-50. Attacked by *Bucks Gazette*, 50. Enters High Wycombe, 51. His appearance, 52. Speech on the hustings, 53-4. Supported by Radicals, 54; and by Tories, *ib.* Defeated, 54-5. Radicals his principal supporters, 55. Controversy with Colonel Grey, 56-7. Issues address to High Wycombe, 57-60; in favour of Ballot, Triennial Parliaments, and reduced expenditure, *ib.* Speaks at High Wycombe, 59-61. Speech remarkably like later utterances, *ib.* Nominated, 61. His speech, 61-4. He stood as a Liberal, although he abused Whigs, 62-3. Again defeated, 64. Attends county nomination at Aylesbury, *ib.* Difference in his attitude at first and second Wycombe elections, 64-5. Issues Radical address to Marylebone, 65. Advocates again Triennial Parliaments and Ballot, *ib.*; and a land tax, 65-6. This a distinctly Radical cry, 66; and a question of the hour, *ib.* Publishes "What is He?" 67. Advocates coalition of Tories and Radicals, 68; the Ballot and Triennial Parliaments, *ib.* His successive changes of front in town and country, 69-70. Seeks in agriculturists tools, 71-2. Attends agricultural dinner at Aylesbury, 72. Neglected, 73-4. Declares a conspiracy exists against agriculturists, 75; denounces manufacturers, *ib.*; pays court to Lord Chandos, 75-6. Eulogium of yeomanry compared with "Vivian Grey," 76; principles at Marylebone and at Aylesbury diametrically opposite 76-7. Described by Greville as mighty impartial, 77-8. Publishes "The Crisis Examined," 79. Strongly condemns Irish Tithes, *ib.*; recommends reduction of Irish Church, 79-80; and modification of Church-rates, 80. Strongly defends Peel from charge of tergiversation, 80-81; compares Reform Ministry to Ducrow, 81-2. Rejected a third time for Wycombe, 82; cheerful in defeat, *ib.* Publishes "Revolutionary Epick," 83; extraordinary preface, 83-5. Opposes Labouchere at Taunton as a Conservative, 87. Astonishment at this announcement, 87-8. Described by Westminster Elector as member of a Liberal club, 88. Opposes reduction of Irish Church, 90; and abolition of Irish Tithes, 90-91; notwithstanding his support of both in "Crisis Examined," *ib.*; and though tithes had just caused terrible massacre, 91-2. Yet claims perfect consistency, 92-3. Endeavours to reconcile his present hostility to, with his past friendship for the Liberals, 93-4. His defence examined, 94-7. Denies charge of Westminster Elector, 97. The charge proved correct, 98-100. Attacks O'Connell, 100-101. Stated a short time previously to have eulogised him, 102. Replied to by O'Connell, 102-5. Challenges

O'Connell's son, 107. Challenge declined, *ib.* Writes abusive letter to O'Connell, 108-12. A man of unfailing self-conceit, 113. Publishes "Vindication of the English Constitution," 114. An egotistic anecdote, 115-16. The Commons an Estate, 116. Attacks O'Connell, Hume, and Marylebone Radicals, 117. Indicts the Whig party, 118. Accuses them of limiting creation of Peers, *ib.* The charge unfounded, 118-20. Eulogises George III., 120; and Pitt, *ib.* Describes Tory as national party, *ib.* Portrays himself under Bolingbroke, 120-22. Bolingbroke praised for deserting Tory principles in office, 123. Is this conduct justified? 124-5. Defends this principle in Peel as well as Bolingbroke, 125-6. "Vindication" reviewed in *Globe*, 126-7. Replies, 128. Attacked by *Globe*, 128. Replies in *Times*, 129. Gives version of his relations with O'Connell and Hume, 129-32. The version examined, 132-5. Again attacked by *Globe*, 134-5; which produces letter of Bulwer to prove his Radicalism, 134. Denies that Hume wrote to him directly, or that he ever saw Hume at his house, 135-6. *Globe* appeals to Scott and Hume, 136; both assert that he called at Hume's house, and that he applied as a Liberal, 136-41. Hume asserts his letter was directed to him, 138. These letters conclusive of his early Liberalism, 139-40. Abusively replies to Hume, 141-3; yet practically confirms Hume's assertions, 141-2; while abusing Hume, mentions former obligations, 142. This alteration of praise and abuse one of his worst characteristics, 142-3; compelled to acknowledge that he received Hume's letter direct, 143-4. The moral of the *Globe* controversy, 144. Begins "Runnymede Letters," 145. Attacks Melbourne, 145; and Brougham, 145-6; and Russell, 146; and Palmerston, 146-7; and Hobhouse, 147. Eulogises Peel, 147-9. Attacks the late Earl Grey, 149. Character of those letters, 149-50. Contests Maidstone, 150-54. Character of his address, 150-51. Gives a new version of his relations with O'Connell, 151. The version examined, 151-2; and proved incorrect, 152-3; yet claims complete consistency, 152-3. Opposed by Colonel Thompson, 151. Their principles compared, 153-4. Elected, 154. Makes maiden speech, 154. Character of the House he addressed, 154-61. Rises immediately after O'Connell, 165-6. Unfavourable reception, 167-70. Appearance on the occasion, 171-2. Speech not unlike future efforts, 172-3. Judged by the Press, 173-5. Unnoticed by Lord Stanley, 175. Cheered by Peel, 175-6. Undeterred by failure, 177-9. Again addresses House, 179. Supports Talfourd's Copyright Bill, 179; opposes Russell's Education Grant, *ib.* Professes sympathy with Chartists, 179-80. This profession examined, 180-82. Opposes increase of Police, 182. Attacked by Mr. Fox Maule, 182. Replies, 183. Again advocates alliance of Chartists and aristocracy, 183. Asks explanations on Ministerial changes, 183-4. Snubbed, 184. Eulogises Peel, *ib.* Opposes Villiers on Corn Laws, *ib.*; and supports Duncombe on Chartists, 184. Speaks on Sugar Duties, 185. Highly eulogises Peel, 185-6. Attacks Russell, 186. Again eulogises Peel, 186-7; who is approaching office, 187. Marries Mrs. Lewis, *ib.* Contests Shrewsbury, 188-95. Enters town, 181; declares Wycombe his birthplace, and the property of his father, 188-90. These statements examined, *ib.* Denies he had O'Connell's assistance at Wycombe, 191. Is called a Winchester scholar, *ib.* This statement examined, 192. Declares Peel the greatest statesman of his age, 193. Challenged to a

duel, 193. Assisted by his wife in canvassing, 193-4. First displays his crest, 194. Elected, 195. Pronounces vehement eulogium on Peel, 195-6. Describes himself as Peel's humble, but fervent supporter, 195. Why this adulation? 196-7. Publishes "Henrietta Temple," and "Venetia," 197. Those works analysed, 197-200. Publishes "Alarcos," 200. A ridiculous failure, 200-201. Political and literary success contrasted, 201. On Parliament assembling (1841), supports Peel's commercial measures, 202. Denies Free Trade is a monopoly of Whigs, 202-3; and maintains Peel can better carry Free Trade measures, *ib.* Denies election of '41 favourable to Protection, 204. This statement contrasted with later statement, *ib.* Rebukes Whig Cabinet for using the Queen's name, 205-6. Inconsistent therein with his own teaching, *ib.* Receives no promotion from Peel, 206; but conceals his disappointment, 206-7. Proposes a fusion of diplomatic and consular service, 207. Severely ridiculed by Palmerston, 207. Coldly received by Peel, 207-8. Yet vigorously supports Peel's new Corn Law, 212-13. That law evidently in the direction of Free Trade, 208-11; and opposed as such by ultra-Protectionists, 209-11. Denies Peel is guilty of inconsistency, 212-13; and again contends the Tory leaders have always favoured Free Trade, 213; and that Peel is acting exactly as his Tory predecessors, *ib.* Re-asserts those opinions, 213-14. Forms Young England party, 214. Contrasted with G. Smythe, 220. Nature of their friendship, 221-4. Distrusted by fathers of Lord J. Manners and G. Smythe, 222-3. Delivers address at Manchester Athenæum, 223. Unlikely from birth and training to believe Young England gospel, 225-8; yet preaches it zealously, 228-9. Publishes "Coningsby," 229. Description of Lord Monmouth, *ib.*; of Mr. Rigby, *ib.* Contrasted with Thackeray, 229-30. Eulogises the powerful while satirizing the feeble, 230-31. Flattering portrait of Lord Lonsdale as Lord Eskdale, 231. The Estates again, *ib.* Similarity of ideas in "Vindication," *ib.* Satirizes Tories of Liverpool's time, and denounces their doctrines, 231-2. Eulogises Peel, 232. Calls him a "distinguished personage," *ib.*; a "great man," *ib.*; and acquits him of intrigue. *ib.* Introduces Sidonia, *ib.*; who proclaims the divinity of youth, *ib.*; and universal genius of Jews, *ib.*; and vehemently denounces Parliamentary institutions, 232-3. Those ideas realised, 233. Divine right taught, 233-4. Introduction of the Beaumanoir family, 234. Abject flattery of the nobility, 234-6; even of those who were enemies, 236. Proposes restoration of the maypole, 237; and of almsgiving, *ib.* Jumbling of sacred and frivolous themes, 238-9. The State to be saved by its youth, 239. Young England summarized, *ib.*; criticised by Thackeray, 240-41. A ridiculous love story, 240. Publishes "Sybil," 241. Its object, 241-2. The *dramatis personæ*, 242-3. The days of the Abbots recalled with regret, 243. Ritualism highly praised, 243-4. Descriptions of working classes mere daubs, 244-5. Egremont the representative of Young Englandism, 245. The aristocrats the natural leaders of the people, 245-6. Self-laudation, 246-7. Advances still coldly received by Peel, 248-9. First encounter with Peel, 249. Second, *ib.* Accuses Peel of an inconsistent Irish policy, 249-50. Sneers at Peel's want of courtesy and explicitness, 251. Advocates integrity of Turkey, *ib.* Attacked by Lord Sandon, 252. Defended by Hume, *ib.*; Palmerston, *ib.*; Smythe, *ib.*; and Curteis, *ib.* Action in 1844, 253. Declares Ire-

land afflicted by a starving population, an absentee aristocracy, and an alien Church, 254. Probably contemplating change to Liberal benches, 255-8. Defends Ferrand, 259-60; alludes to painful scene in '43 between Peel and Cobden, 261-2; satirizes Lord Stanley, 262. Acknowledges open hostility to Peel, *ib.* Makes violent attack on Peel, 264. Accuses him of affecting emotion, *ib.*; and of selecting as a colleague a confederate of Despard, 265. Sarcastically answered by Peel, *ib.*; and proved grossly inaccurate in his Despard charge, 266. Abjectly apologises, 266-7. Again attacks Peel, 267. Charges him with tyranny to his supporters, 267; and with stealing Whig principles, *ib.* Ridicules his love of quotation, 268; and insinuates that he was a treacherous friend of Canning's, *ib.* Sneeringly answered by Peel, 268-9. Again attacks Peel, 270-72. Charges him with betraying the agriculturists, 270-71; and with intended abandonment of Protection, 271. Replied to by Peel, 272-3; and shown to have enthusiastically supported the acts he was condemning, *ib.* Joins the Conservative Rump against Maynooth Grant, 274-5. Satirizes Peel's love of precedent, 275. Styles Peel a Parliamentary middleman, 275-6. Calls on the Catholics to oppose him, 276; and the Whigs, 276-7. Action in 1845 estimated, 277-8. Position in 1846, 287. Excellent materials to work on, *ib.* Denounces Peel's adoption of Free Trade, 287-8. Claims to have consistently supported Protection, 289-90. This claim examined, *ib.* Illustrates happily Peel's position, 290-2. Charges him with want of originality, 292. Misrepresents an innocent phrase of Peel's, 294-5. Denounces political inconsistency, 295-6; yet himself most inconsistent, 297. Opposes Peel's measure, 298. Defines party obligations, 298. His definition contrasted with his own acts, 298-9; and with his own preaching in '35, 299-300; and in '67, 300. Peel's acts in accordance with his teaching, *ib.* Again alludes to old quarrel between Cobden and Peel, 301. Attacks Roebuck, *ib.* Conduct contrasted with that of Peel and Cobden, 301-2. Extravagantly eulogises a worthless speech of Bentinck, 302-3. Misrepresents a phrase of Cobden's, 307-8; and an act of Peel's, *ib.* Answered by Peel and Cobden, etc., 308-9. Apologises, 309. His persistence in unfounded charges, *ib.* Induces another debate on a phrase of Peel's, 310. Misquotes Mill, *ib.* Exposed by Roebuck, 311-12; and accused of tergiversation, *Ib.* His defence, 312. Calls O'Connell a great man, *ib.* His inconsistencies the natural outgrowth of his character, 313; and career in perfect accord with teaching of "Vivian Grey," 313-15. Again attacks Peel, 316. Stinging reply by Peel, 316-17. Accused of seeking office under Peel, 317. Makes a quibbling reply, 318-20. Advises Bentinck to oppose second reading of the Coercion Bill, 322. Though Bentinck had supported introduction, *ib.* Suggests to Bentinck an attack on Peel, in reference to Canning and the Catholic claims, 328-32. Renews Bentinck's attack on these points, 333-45. Pronounces an extravagant eulogium on Canning, 341. The eulogium vulgar, *ib.*; and proved utterly insincere, 342-3. Answered by Peel, 345-54. Helps to expel Peel from power, 358. His success deserving of contempt, not admiration, 359. Opposes abolition of protection on sugar, 360. Great object to prevent reconciliation between Peel and Protectionists, 361. Takes seat on front Opposition bench, 362-3. Supports Bentinck's Irish scheme, 364. Attacks Palmerston's Spanish policy, *ib.*; and

policy towards Russia, 365. Opposes all economical reforms, 366. Poor wit, 366-7. Stands for Bucks, 367. Reasons, *ib.* Condemns immediate attempt to restore Protection, 368-9. Dishonesty of his action, 369-70. Elected for Bucks, 370. On future hopes, 370-71. Position in new Parliament, 372. Encounters difficulty on Jewish disabilities, 372-3. Leader of an anti-Jewish party, 373-4. Conduct contrasted with Bentinck's, 377-381. Speaks respectfully of the enemies of the Jews, 379. Blames Russell for dealing with the question, 379-80; and retains seat on front Opposition bench, 380-81. Views as to relations of Judaism and Christianity, 381-84; maintains they are practically the same, 381-2. This view examined, 382. Claims Crucifixion as an honour to the Jews, 382-3. Continuous opposition to economical reform, 384-5. Poor quality of speeches, 385. Comedy of his appearance as financier, 385-6. Attacks Cobden and Bright, 386. Contemptuously answered, 386-7. Again attacks Cobden and Bright, 387. Approves Palmerston's Prussian policy, *ib.* Scoffs at German nationality, *ib.* Condemns Palmerston's Spanish policy, 387-8. Reviews session, 388-90. Reasons for doing so examined, 388-9. Character of speech, 389-90. Was he trying to cut Bentinck out? 388. Freed from Bentinck's rivalry, 390. Negotiations for leadership, 390-92. Proposes amendment to address, 391. Discussed by the *Morning Chronicle*, 391-2. Again condemns Palmerston's encouragement of Liberal movement on Continent, 392. No sympathy with Hungary or Italy, 392-3. Claims retrenchment as a Tory principle, 393. Echoes gloomy prophecies as to results of Free Trade, 394. Rewarded in spite of stupendous blunders, 394-5. Next move in Protection, 395. Proposes motion on local taxation, 395-6. Absurd attack on the manufacturers, 396-7. Proposes motion on state of the nation, *ib.* Recognized as leader, 397. Suggests reciprocity as substitute for Protection, 398. This a partial abandonment of Protection, 398-99. Opposed by Peel, 399. Frequent in his attacks on Peel, 399-400. Defeated, 400. On Protectionist amendment, 402. Refuses to raise general question of Protection and Free Trade, 402-3. Denies land depended on any artificial law, 403. Effect of the speech on the subsequent debate, 403-4. Denounced by Cobden and others for his policy of duplicity, 404. Proposes reduction of county taxation, *ib.* Defends himself for not bringing forward Protection directly, 405; and announces he will not appeal on the subject to that Parliament, *ib.* Opposed by Peel and Graham, but supported by Gladstone, 405-6. Effect on the division, 406. Supports Mr. Grantley Berkeley's motion for a five-shilling duty, *ib.*; and again declares he will not raise question of Protection before that Parliament, 406-7. Again denounced by Cobden for duplicity, 406-7. Declines to move vote of censure on Palmerston's foreign policy, 407. Speech on Roebuck's motion, 409-10. In the same lobby with Peel, 410. Death of Peel, 410-11. Effect on political fortunes, 411-12. Opposes extension of franchise in Ireland, 412; and in England, *ib.* Accused of tergiversation by Sir B. Hall, 412-13. His reply, 412-14. Again claims High Wycombe as his place of birth, 414. Continues his prevaricating policy on Protection, *ib.* Success of motion on agricultural distress, 414-15. Russell tenders resignation, 415. Served by this crisis, 416. Not applied to primarily by Lord Derby, 416-17. On Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, 418. Conduct contrasted with that of Graham and Gladstone,

ib. Attacks Russell Ministry on the Act, 420. On Russell's Reform Bill, 420-21. Disclaims "finality" in politics, 421. Accused by Sir G. Grey of duplicity on Reform, *ib.* Chancellor of the Exchequer, 423. Reception of the appointment, 423-4. Vague declarations, 429-30. Object, 430-31. Speech in Parliament, 431-3. Sharply criticised, 433. Interrogated by Russell, 434. Unsatisfactory answer, *ib.* Condemned by Mr. Osborne, 434-5; by Sir B. Hall, 435; by Cobden, *ib.*; and by Mr. Bright, *ib.* Introduces Militia Bill, 436; and carries, *ib.* Introduces Budget, *ib.* Free Trade character of Budget, 436-40. Conduct contrasted with expressions of opinion in "Life of Bentinck," 437-8. Discussed, 438-40. Declares time for reviving Protection past, 441. Again attacked by Lord J. Russell, 441-2. Denies he ever sought restoration of Protection, 442. This statement examined, 443-4. Abandons fixed duty, 444-5. Contradictory principles of supporters, 445-6. Again repudiates intention of restoring Protection, 445. The ambiguous royal speech, 446-9. Announces adoption of Free Trade, 450. Suggests revision of taxation, 450-51; not rebuked even by Peel's friends, 451. Pronounces oration on Wellington, 452. Discovered to have stolen a great part from Thiers, 452-6. On Villiers' motion, 457-9. Declares he had never attempted to restore Protection, *ib.* This statement examined, 457-8. Declares he was not elected as a Protectionist; this statement examined, 458. Appeals to generosity of others, 459. Examined in this new character, *ib.* Proposes an amendment almost the same as that of Villiers, 459-60. Rescued by Palmerston, 460-61; and thus gives *coup de grâce* to Protection, 461. Attacked by Lord Granby, *ib.*; by Mr. Osborne, 461-2; and by Sidney Herbert, 462, who delivers scathing invective on treatment of Peel, 462-4. Remains unmoved, 464-5. His reflections, 465-6. Votes against Protection, 466. Opposed by those he had celebrated in "Life of Bentinck," 466-7. Contrast of his position and theirs, 467. Proposes Budget, *ib.* Speech discussed by Macaulay, 468. Abandonment of former doctrines, 468-9. Proposes reduction of Malt Tax, 470; change of Income Tax, *ib.*; and doubling of House Tax, *ib.* Makes incorrigible blunders, 470-71. Budget full of errors, *ib.*; and sharply criticised, 471. Tries to avert fate, 471-2; foiled, 472. Resorts to invective, 472-3. Scathing analysis by Gladstone, 473-6. Defeated, 476. Resigns, *ib.* Estimate of Ministerial conduct, 476-7. Rumour of resignation, 478-9. Reply, 479. Speech on French alliance, *ib.* Opposes Gladstone's financial reforms, *ib.* Conduct of Opposition during Crimean war, 480-81. Supports Layard's attack on Ministry, 481. Again attacks the Ministry, 481-2. Opposes Gladstone's doubling Income Tax, 483; and denounces war as coalition war, 483-4; but proposes no vote of censure, 484. Denounces Ministry for conduct on Reform, 484-5. On declaration of war, again attacks Ministry, 485; and continues opposition to Gladstone's financial proposals, *ib.* Defends right of Opposition to criticise Ministry, 486-7. Opposes Gladstone's proposal to raise £2,000,000, 487; and attacks Ministry generally, *ib.* Unexpectedly makes another attack, 487-8. Answered by Russell, 488-9. Renews attack, 489. Denounced by one of his own supporters, 489-90. Conduct in session of 1854 estimated, 489-90. Opposes abolition of religious oaths, 490-91; and, as a result, emancipation of Jews, *ib.* On re-assembling of Parliament criticises action of Ministry in

tail, 491. Denounced by Russell for unpatriotic conduct, *ib.* Rakes up attacks on Louis Napoleon, *ib.*; and highly eulogises Layard, *ib.* Supports Roebuck's motion, 492; and assails Russell, *ib.* Ready to accept Palmerston's lead in Commons, 493; but negotiations fail, *ib.* Attacks Palmerston Administration, 493-4. Denounces Palmerston's love of secrecy, 496. Proposes vote of censure on Palmerston, 496-7; defeated by large majority, 497. Joins in other attacks on Ministry, 498. Rebuked by Prince Consort, 499, 500. Supports Roebuck's vote of censure, 501. Action during the Crimean war estimated, 501-2. Condemns Palmerston's friendship to Italy, 502; and supports Austrian rule, *ib.* Supports Cobden's motion on China war, 505. Attacks Palmerston as aggressive in foreign, and unprogressive in domestic, policy, 506-10. Conduct during Indian Mutiny, 511. Attacks Lord Canning, *ib.*; and Palmerston, 511-12. Again returns to the attack, 512; defeated, 513. Again accuses Palmerston of aggressive foreign policy, 514-15; and reverts to Indian question, 515. Opposes vote of thanks to Lord Canning, 515. Censured by his own supporters, *ib.* Opposes Palmerston's Indian Bill, 515-16. Supports Palmerston'sConspiracy Bill, 516; but afterwards opposes, *ib.* Again Minister, *ib.* Takes up Palmerston's India Bill, 517; which is threatened with defeat, 517-18; rescued by Russell, 518. A cool proposal, 518-519. On Gladstone's amendment, 519-20. The Slough speech, 521-2. Appealed to by Mr. Newdegate against admission of Jews, 522-3. Introduces Reform Bill, 523-4. On rights of House of Commons, 525. Defeated, 524-5. Appeals to the country, 525. Defeated, *id.* Rencontre with Graham, 525-7. Resigns, 525. Attitude during Palmerston Ministry, 526-28. Strongly defends non-intervention, 528-9. Denounces the conclusion of secret treaties, 529-33. Condemns French treaty as violation of privileges of Commons, 532-3. Opposes Reform Bill, 533; principally because it would increase influence of working classes, 534. Praises the members of the Government for neglecting Reform, 534-5. Denounces Premier for secret diplomacy in Italian policy, 535-7. Adheres to neutrality in American war, 535. Denounces bloated armaments, 535-8; excessive taxation, 535-8. Supports Mr. Bright on armaments, 536; on relations with Canada, 537-8. Again defends neutrality in American war, 539. Complains of Palmerston's degradation of Parliament, *ib.*; and war policy, 540. Denounces Stansfeld, 541. Result of the attack, 542-3. Accused by Bright of advocating assassination in "Revolutionary Epick," 541-2. Indignantly denies the statement, 542. Publishes new edition of "Revolutionary Epick," 542-3. Garbles passage on assassination, 543. Dedicates new edition to present Lord Derby, 544. Assertions in dedication examined, *ib.* "On the side of the angels," 545. Opposes abolition of offensive oaths, *ib.* In favour of "lateral" not radical reform, 545-6. Again elected for Bucks, 546. Strongly advocates non-intervention and pacific foreign policy, 546-7. Conduct in opposition to Palmerston estimated, *ib.* Opposes the Russell-Gladstone Reform Bill, 549; principally because of increasing power to the working classes, *ib.* Again Minister, 550. Declares Reform no longer a party question, 550-51. Estimate of such a declaration, 551. Declares Conservatives never opposed Reform, 551-2. This declaration examined, 552-3. Proposes proceeding by resolution, 553-4; but substitutes a bill instead, 554. Announces abandonment of £6 Rating Bill, 555-6; and resignation of three

ministers, 556-7. Explanation of this move, 558-9. This explanation examined, *ib.* Introduces Household Suffrage Bill, 559-60. This an act of gross tergiversation, 560-61. Statement on personal rating, 562. Proposes disfranchisement of compound householder, 564-5; and a rating franchise in counties, 566. Position as a minister, 567-8. Accepts nearly all amendments of Opposition, 568-71. Denounced by Lord Salisbury, 571-4. Character of his reply, 572-4. Entertained at Edinburgh, 575. Boasts of having educated his party, *ib.* Publishes garbled report of Edinburgh speech, 577-8. Prime Minister, 578. Dismisses Lord Chelmsford, *ib.* Announces policy, 579. Opposes abolition of Irish Church, 580. Speech contrasted with Irish speech of 1844, 580. His defence, 580-82. This defence examined, 581-3. Endeavours to raise No-Popery cry, 583. The Dartmouth letter, *ib.* Endeavours to evade question of Irish Church, 583-4; but foiled, 584. Denounced for equivocation by Lord Salisbury, 584-5; and by Mr. Lowe, 585-6. Replies, 586-7. Extraordinary attack on Ritualists and Catholics, 586-8. Declares attack on Irish Church an attack on Crown, 588. Effect of this use of Queen's name, 588-9. Again attempts No-Popery cry, 589. Defeated on Gladstone resolutions, *ib.* The Maunday Thursday letter, 589-90. Not a true Christian, 590; though thus playing the Christian champion, 590-91. Such conduct estimated, *ib.* Again defeated on Irish Church, 591. Explains intentions, 591-2. Announces dissolution, 591; and throws responsibility on Queen, 592-3. Attacked for introducing Queen's name, by Mr. Ayrton, 593-4; by Mr. Gladstone, 594; and by Mr. Bright, 595-6. Replies, *ib.* Defeated on Reform Bills, 596. Address to constituents, 597. Defeated at general election, *ib.* Resigns, *ib.* Action during Gladstone Ministry, 597-8. Speech at Manchester, 597-8. Influenced by Hope's "Anastasius," 598. Publishes "Lothair," 599. Guilty of many plagiarisms, 599-600. Again Premier, 601. Supports Public Worship Act, 602-3; although formerly Ritualistic, 603-4. Attacks Lord Salisbury, 603. The Pigott case, 605-8. Policy on the Eastern Question, 606. Predisposition on such a controversy, 607-8. Treated Eastern Question from Jewish standpoint, 609; expressions in works as to affinity of Jews and Mohammedans, 610-11; and their bond of hate against Christians, *ib.*; therefore a friend to Turkey, 610. Magnificent prospect offered in defending Turkey, 611-12. This policy in accordance with interests, 613. His Jewish contempt for Christian people, 613-14. Taught by Palmerston that Russophobia is the winning game, 615. Declares for non-intervention and *status quo* in Turkey, 617; reluctantly consents to Andrassy Note, 618. Rejects Berlin Memorandum, 619; and persists in breaking up European concert in spite of all remonstrances, *ib.* Questioned as to reports of Bulgarian massacres, 620-21. Completely denies their accuracy, *ib.* Gross mistake as to Philippopolis, *ib.* Gives high character of the Circassians, 621; although he had ample opportunity of ascertaining the truth of Bulgarian atrocities, 622-5. On Consul Reade's despatch, 625-6. Last speech in the House of Commons, 626. Raised to peerage, 626-7. The Aylesbury speech, 647-52. Makes another incorrect statement on Eastern Question, 649-51. Uniformity of his inaccuracy, 651-2. Alone responsible for Turcophile policy, 653-5. The Guildhall speech, 655-6. Policy during Russo-Turkish war, 657-8. Triumphant,

660. Sets Parliament at defiance, 661-3. Again breaks up European concert on San Stefano Treaty, 663. Attends Berlin Congress, 664. Concludes Anglo-Turkish Convention, 666-8. Enters London in triumph after Berlin Treaty, 669-71. The Montefiore episode, 671. Meaning of this triumphant entry, 672. His whole character estimated, 672-5.

D'Israeli, B., grandfather of Lord Beaconsfield, 4.

D'Israeli, Isaac, father of Lord Beaconsfield, 1. Struck with blindness, 2-3. Indifferent in religion, 6. Breaks off connection with Judaism, *ib.* Takes Bradenham House, 44.

D'Israeli, James, brother to Lord Beaconsfield, 2. Commissioner of Inland Revenue, 3. Death, *ib.*

Disraeli, Maria, Viscountess Beaconsfield, widow of Mr. W. Lewis, 187; marries Lord Beaconsfield, *ib.*; assists him in canvass of Shrewsbury, 193-4.

D'Israeli, Ralph, brother of Lord Beaconsfield, 2. Deputy Clerk of Parliaments, 3.

D'Israeli, Sarah, sister of Lord Beaconsfield, 2; traces of her influence in "Alroy," *ib.* Death, *ib.*; buried in Willesden Cemetery, Paddington, *ib.* Assists her father in his blindness, 2-3. Betrothed to Mr. Meredith, 3. Retires to Twickenham, 4. Her tomb, *ib.*

Disraeli, B., of Dublin, reputed uncle of Lord Beaconsfield, 5.

"Dissertations on Parties" (Bolingbroke) contains Whig principles, 124.

Divine Right rejected by Bolingbroke, according to Lord Beaconsfield, 123. Advocated by Lord J. Manners, 214-15, 216; and by Lord Beaconsfield in "Coningsby," 233-4.

Dod, date of Lord Beaconsfield's birth in, 1.

Dorset County Chronicle, speech of Lord Beaconsfield in, 92.

Drummond, Mr., assassinated, 261.

Drummond, Mr. Henry, attacks Lord Beaconsfield for embarrassing Aberdeen Ministry, 485-6; and for censuring Lord Canning, 515.

Dublin Evening Post contains report on Rathcormack massacre, 92.

Dublin represented by D. O'Connell, 169.

Dublin Review on "Lothair," 599.

Ducrow, Reform Ministry compared to, by Lord Beaconsfield, 81-2.

Duncombe, T., appearance in 1837, 157-8. Proposes better treatment of Chartist prisoners, 184. One of Lord Beaconsfield's early teachers, 228. Obtains correspondence of F. O'Connor for Lord Beaconsfield, 242.

Duncombes, The, vote against Peel, 357.

Dundas, Harry, 514.

Dunkellin, Lord, carries amendment on Russell-Gladstone Reform Bill, 550. Use of the amendment made by Lord Beaconsfield, 563-4, 566.

Dupuis, Vice-Consul, on arming of Bashi-Bazouks, 622-3.

Durham, Earl of, a Radical among Whigs, 78; yet a friend of Lord Beaconsfield's at the same time as Lord Chandos an ultra-Tory, 77-8. Death, 162.

Edinburgh represented by Macaulay, 183. Lord Beaconsfield entertained at, 575.

Edinburgh Daily Review reports Lord Beaconsfield's Edinburgh speech, 577. Report contrasted with official report, 577-8.

Edinburgh Evening Courant reports Lord Beaconsfield's speech, 577. Report contrasted with official report, 577-8.

Edinburgh Review on Lord Beaconsfield's place of education, 10. Plagiarised by Lord Beaconsfield, 599-600.

Edwards, Miss A. B., authoress of "Half a Million of Money," 599. Influence on "Lothair," *ib.*

Egerton, Lord Francis, abandons Protection, 287.

Egremont, character in "Sybil," 245.

Egypt, an impalement in, described by Lord Beaconsfield, 16. A Pacha of, described by Lord Beaconsfield, 115-16.
Ellenborough, Earl of, President of Board of Control, 520. The Canning proclamation, *ib.* Resigns, *ib.*
Ellice, Rt. Hon. E., attacked by Lord Beaconsfield, 81.
Elliott, Sir H., states there is no English consul at Philippopolis, 621. Denounces employment of Circassians and Bashi-Bazouks, *ib.* On Baring's Bulgarian report, 639.
Ellis, Mrs., said to have had Lord Beaconsfield baptized, 8.
Elmore, Dr. John, seconded Lord Beaconsfield as member of Liberal Club, 97-8.
"England's Trust" published, 214. Analysed, 215-18.
Erastianism condemned in "Sybil," 244.
Eskdale, Lord, stands for Lord Lonsdale in "Coningsby," 231, 240.
Everingham, Lady, character in "Coningsby," 238-8.
Everingham, Lord, character in "Coningsby," 237-3.
Examiner, The, on Peel in '41, 210-11. On Lord Beaconsfield's first appointment as Chancellor of the Exchequer, 424. Quoted, 429-30.

"Fakredeen," a character in "Tancred," 611.
Family Herald, compared to Lord Beaconsfield's novels, 198.
Farmer, Captain, husband of Lady Blessington, 11.
Ferrand, Mr., character, 259. Abusiveness, 260. Patronised by Lord Beaconsfield, *ib.* Why, *ib.* Attacks Sir J. Graham, 261. Defended by Lord Beaconsfield, *ib.*, and 399.
Finsbury represented by Mr. Duncombe, 263.
Fonblanque, A., meets Lord Beaconsfield at Lady Blessington's, 17. A Liberal, though no Whig, 62.
Fonblanque, E. B. de, on friendship of Lord Beaconsfield with Lord J. Manners and the Hon. G. Smythe, 222-3.
Fortnightly Review on friendship of Lord J. Manners and Lord Beaconsfield, 236. On difference in Lord Beaconsfield's estimates of men, 258-9.
Forsyth, Mr., guest of Mr. Meredith, 3.
Fox, C. J., appealed to by Lord Beaconsfield against Peel, 277.
Fox, W. J., in the Anti-Corn-Law League, 280.
France, treaty with, condemned by Lord Beaconsfield, 532-3. Joins in Berlin Memorandum, 618. Foreign Minister regrets English rejection of Berlin Memorandum, 619.
Francis, G. H., on orators of the age, 155. On Lord Beaconsfield, 248-9.
Frederick the Great, Russell compared to, by Lord Beaconsfield, 259.
Free Trade an issue in '41 election, 202; not a monopoly of the Whigs, according to Lord Beaconsfield, 203; could according to the same authority be carried by Peel, 202-3. This statement contrasted with later statement by Lord Beaconsfield, 204. The result of '41 election not hostile to, *ib.* This statement contrasted with later statement of Lord Beaconsfield, *ib.* Principles practically professed by Peel in '41, 208; and partially adopted, 208-11. According to Lord Beaconsfield, a Tory principle, 213-14. Adopted by Whigs as a cry, 281. Peel and Russell's position towards contrasted, 281-3. Adopted by Peel, 286.
Froude, Mr., student at Oxford, 227. Influenced by Tractarianism, *ib.*

General Preface ("Lothair") on Count D'Orsay, 13. On "Contarini Fleming," 19.
Gentleman's Magazine on Lord Beaconsfield's baptism, 8-9. Contains death of Mr. Pigott, 608.
George III. eulogised in "Vindication," 120.

Gerard, character in "Sybil," 242.
Germany, joins in Andrassy Note, 617. Issues Berlin Memorandum, 618.
Gibson, Milner, Mr., proposes vote of censure on Palmerston, 495. Postpones motion, 496.
Gilbert, S. W., works of, compared with Young England novels, 239.
Girardin, Mons. de, duel with Carrel, 87.
Gladstone, Right Hon. W. E., in 1837, 160-61. Vulgarly attacked by Lord Beaconsfield, 173. Supports Lord Beaconsfield's motion for reduction of county taxation, 406. Effect of his action, *ib.* Offered office by Lord Derby, 417. Votes against Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, 418. On Lord Beaconsfield's explanations, 433; and first Budget, 438-9. Answers Lord Beaconsfield's invective, 473-5; and analyses his Budget, 476. Chancellor of the Exchequer, 478. Financial reforms opposed by Lord Beaconsfield, 479. Proposes doubling of income tax, 482-3. Replies to Lord Beaconsfield, 484. Proposes to raise £2,000,000, 487. Again offered office by Derby, 492-3. Refuses, 493. Resigns, 494. Favourable to peace, 495. Asks Gibson to withdraw motion, 495-6. Supports Cobden's motion on China war, 505. Leader of the House of Commons, 547. Introduces Reform Bill, *ib.* Introduces Redistribution Bill, 549. Carried, 549-50. On Grosvenor's amendment, 548. Resigns, 550. Objects to simultaneous discussion on Lord Beaconsfield's resolution and bill, 555; on abandonment of £6 Rating Bill, 557-9; on the Dual vote, 562; on personal rating, 563-4; on compound householder, 565. Demands wholesale changes in Lord Beaconsfield's Reform Bill, 566-7. Anomalous position as Opposition leader, 567-8. All his suggestions accepted, 569-71. Position described by Lord Salisbury, 572-4. Announces intention to attack Irish Church, 580. Announces Irish Church resolutions, 583. Carries committee, 589; and first resolution, 591. Condemns Lord Beaconsfield's use of Queen's name, 594. Carries Suspensory Bill, 596. Prime Minister, 597. Dissolves Parliament, 600. One of the Liberators of the East, 628. Publishes pamphlet on Bulgarian horrors, 646; and becomes foremost champion of Eastern Christians, 646-7. Article in *Nineteenth Century*, 660-61. On Berlin Treaty, 668.
Globe, controversy with Lord Beaconsfield, 126-144. On Mrs. Disraeli's share in Shrewsbury election, 194. On Lord Beaconsfield's plagiarism from Thiers, 452-4. Publishes Salisbury-Schouvaloff Memorandum, 665.
Goethe, said by Lord Beaconsfield to have admired "Contarini Fleming," 19.
Gortschakoff (Prince), on English rejection of Berlin Memorandum, 619.
Graham, Sir James, in 1837, 161. Attacked by Mr. Ferrand, 261. Home Secretary, 262-3. Opens Mazzini's letters, 263. Extremely unpopular, *ib.* Opposes Lord Beaconsfield's motion for reduction of county taxation, 405-6. Offered an alliance with Russell, 415; refuses, 416. Votes against Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, 418. On Lord Beaconsfield's explanations, 433. Attacks Lord Beaconsfield's desertion of Protection, 465. Criticises Lord Beaconsfield's Budget, 471. Assailed by Lord Beaconsfield, 472. Defended by Gladstone, 475. First Lord of the Admiralty, 478. Replies to Mr. Layard's attack on Ministry, 481. Attacks on Napoleon, 491. Resigns, 494.
Granby, Marquis of, flattered by Lord Beaconsfield, 299, 315. Opposes third reading of Corn Law Bill, 315. Joint leader with Lord Beaconsfield, 391-2. Remains faithful to Protection, 461; although deserted by Lord Beaconsfield, 466. Quoted by S. Herbert as Protectionist, 463.

Grant, James, describes Lord Beaconsfield's maiden speech 171-2.
Granville, Earl (Lord Leveson), appearance in 1837, 156-7. Asked to form Ministry, 493. Fails, *ib.* On power of Ministers to make war, 615-16.
Grattan, Henry, appearance in 1837, 158.
Grattan, James, appearance in 1837, 158.
Greco, relations with Mazzini, 540.
Greece, Palmerston's policy towards, condemned by Lord Beaconsfield, 510.
Gregg, W. R., on "Sybil," 245. Comptroller of Stationery Department, 606.
Greville's Memoirs on Luttrell's description of Moore and Rogers, 7; on Lord Beaconsfield, 77-8; on Mr. Duncombe, 158.
Grey, Colonel, opposes Lord Beaconsfield, 47. A poor speaker, 50. Makes his entrance into Wycombe, 51. Elected, 55. Attacks Lord Beaconsfield, 56-7. Again contests Wycombe, 61. Elected, 64. Again elected, 82. Circumstances of the election, 151-3. The version examined, *ib.* Announces to Lord Beaconsfield his appointment as Premier, 578.
Grey, Earl, on sliding scale, 210. On Lord Derby's treatment of Protection, 427.
Grey, Earl (the late), in power, 44. Disliked by Radicals, 45. Represented by Lord Beaconsfield as taking an interest in his election, 67. Unfavourably contrasted by "Runnymede" with Peel, 149.
Grey, Sir G., accuses Lord Beaconsfield of duplicity on Reform question, 421.
Grosvenor, Earl of, proposes amendment on Russell-Gladstone Reform Bill, 548. Defeated, 549.
Grote, Mr., in 1837, 160.
Gurney, Rt. Hon. R., introduces Public Worship Bill, 602.

Hackney represented by Mr. J. Holms, 605.
Hafiz Pasha slaughters 300 people at Otluk-Kui, 623. Leads the massacre of Otluk-Kui, 630.
"Half a Million of Money," influence of on "Lothair," 599.
Halifax, condition of, between 1838 and 1842, 358.
Halifax, Viscount, *see* Wood, Sir C.
Hall, Sir Benjamin, accuses Lord Beaconsfield of tergiversation, 412-13; the reply, 412-14. On tactics of Lord Beaconsfield in 1852, 435.
Hampden, John, association with Bucks, 367.
Hampton, Lord (Sir John Pakington), on Lord Beaconsfield's first Budget, 439. Opposes increase of Malt Tax, 485.
Hansard quoted, 180-3-4-6-7-203-4-5-6-7-13, 249, 250, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 262, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 288, 289, 290-92, 293, 295, 301, 302, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 316, 317, 318, 319, 323, 324, 326, 327, 331, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 365, 366, 367, 372, 379, 380, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 392, 393, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 412, 413, 414, 416, 417, 420, 421, 422, 427, 431, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 442, 447, 449, 450, 451, 452, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 475, 489-90, 503, 504-5, 506, 514, 515, 520, 525, 526, 528, 530, 532, 533, 536, 537, 538, 541, 542, 549, 551, 552, 554, 555, 557, 558, 559, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 574, 581, 582, 585, 586, 587, 588, 591, 592, 593, 594 595, 596, 603, 605, 606, 607, 617, 619, 620, 621, 626.
Hants contested by Sir T. Baring, 44.
Hartington, the Marquis of, compared to Whig of 1832, 46. Proposes adverse vote to Derby-Disraeli Ministry, 525.
Harvey, D. W., member of Westminster Reform Club, 100.
Hayward, Mr. A., Q.C., on Lord

Beaconsfield's place of education, 10.
Heathcote, Sir William, flattered by Lord Beaconsfield, 298.
Heine on choice of a grandfather, 7. Said by Lord Beaconsfield to have admired "Contarini Fleming," 19.
Henley, the Rt. Hon. Mr., votes against Peel. 357. Referred to in *Morning Chronicle*, 391. Censures Lord Beaconsfield for attacking Lord Canning, 515. Resigns, 524.
"Henrietta Temple" published, 197; analysed, 198-200.
Herald, The, does not notice Lord Beaconsfield's maiden speech, 173.
Herat, 508-9.
Herbert Marmion, character in "Venetia," 199.
Herbert, Right Hon. S., condemns whining by agriculturists, 271. Attacked by Lord Beaconsfield, *ib.* Delivers invective on Lord Beaconsfield's desertion of Protection, 462-3; and treatment of Peel, 463-4. Resigns, 494.
Herries, Mr., joint leader with Lord Beaconsfield, 391-2. Opposes abolition of Navigation Laws, 393-4.
Hertford, Lord, Lord Monmouth in "Coningsby," 229, 230. Marquis of Steyne in "Vanity Fair," 230. Treatment contrasted, *ib.*
Herzegovina, insurrection in, beginning of Eastern Question, 616. The Andrassy Note, 617.
High Church party accused by Lord Beaconsfield of conspiracy with Catholics, 586-7, 589-90.
"Historic Fancies" published, 224. Analyzed, 224-5.
History of England, *see* Lord Stanhope; *see* also W. N. Molesworth.
Hobhouse, Mr. T. B., opposed by Mr. Roebuck, 47.
Hobhouse, Sir J. C., Minister for War, 47; attacked by Lord Beaconsfield, 81; attacked by "Runnymede," 147.
Hodgkinson, Mr., proposes abolition of compound householder, 569.
Hogg, Mr., charged with corruption by Mr. Ferrand, 261.
Holms, Mr. John, M.P., on Pigott case, 605-8.
Homer, Lord Beaconsfield compares himself to, 85.
Hook, Theodore, guest of Lady Blessington, 13.
Hope, Mr. Henry, friendship with Lord Beaconsfield, 598.
Hope, Mr. T., influence on Lord Beaconsfield, 598.
Horner, Mr., ideas traded on according to Lord Beaconsfield, 316.
Household suffrage proposed by Hume, 180. Opposed by Lord Beaconsfield, 181. Proposed by Derby-Disraeli Ministry, 557.
House of Commons, as described by Lord Beaconsfield, 116-17; first addressed by Lord Beaconsfield, 154; appearance in 1837, 154-61. Bearded by Chartists, 182. Rights defended by Lord Beaconsfield, 525, 532-3.
House of Lords described by Lord Beaconsfield, 117. Censures Palmerston's foreign policy, 407.
Howick, Lord, *see* Grey, Earl.
Hudson, Mr., mentioned in Lord Beaconsfield's maiden speech, 169.
Hughenden, the living of, 606.
Hugo, Victor, discussed at Lady Blessington's, 16.
Hume, J., writes a letter in favour of Lord Beaconsfield, 47. Withdraws letter, 49-50. A Liberal though no Whig, 62. His treatment by Whigs denounced by Lord Beaconsfield, 63; and compared to treatment of Burke, 64. Attacked in "Vindication," 117. Lord Beaconsfield's version of his relations with, 130-32. Represented as having supported him as Tory, 133-5. Inaccuracy of this assertion, 132-5. Denial by Lord Beaconsfield of having received a letter direct from him. 135. Appealed to by *Globe*, 136. Replies asserting that Lord Beaconsfield had asked him for assistance as a Liberal, 137-9, and that he had written to that gentleman direct, *ib.* Publishes the letter of acknowledgment, 139-40. Abusively answered by Lord

Beaconsfield, 141-2; who again denies having received letter, *ib.*; but is afterwards compelled to admit he had, 144. Lord Beaconsfield's new version of the Wycombe alliance. Appearance in 1837, 152. Interrupts Lord Beaconsfield's maiden speech, 167. Proposes household suffrage, 180. Defends Lord Beaconsfield, 252. Supports Maynooth Grant, 273-4. Defends Peel, 354. Censures annexation of Cracow, 365. On Lord Beaconsfield's first Budget, 439-40.

Hungary, not sympathised with, by Lord Beaconsfield, 392.

Huskisson, Mr., blamed by Mrs. Canning for joining Wellington Ministry, 328.

India: Mutiny, 511. Palmerston's Bill, 515. Lord Beaconsfield's first Bill, 517; the Resolutions, 518-19. Lord Beaconsfield's second Bill, 519-20. Troops ordered from, to Malta, 663.

"Infernal Marriage" published, 41.

Ireland, great difficulty to the Ministry, 79; state in 1844, 252; filled with troops, 253. Motion for inquiry into state of, *ib.* Described by Lord Beaconsfield as having a starving population, an absentee aristocracy, and an alien Church, 254. Church of, denounced by Lord Beaconsfield, *ib.* The Famine, 279-80. State of in 1845, 303. Distress in, 363. Threatened with insurrection, 393.

Irish Church attacked by Mr. Gladstone, 580; defended by Lord Beaconsfield, *ib.* Mr. Gladstone's resolutions, 583. Lord Stanley's amendment, *ib.* Committee carried on resolutions, 589. First resolution carried, 591. Carriage of Suspensory Bill, 596.

Irving's "Annals of the Times" quoted, 182, 400, 401, 408, 444, 445, 446, 500, 506, 527, 545, 578, 579, 583, 589.

Isabella, Queen, marriage of, 364.

Italy: Plot of Bandiera Brothers, 263. Non-intervention is recommended by Lord Beaconsfield, 530-32; and striving after unity condemned, 235. Mazzini's action, 542. Joins in Berlin Memorandum, 618. Foreign Minister regrets rejection of English Memorandum, 619.

"Ixion in Heaven" published, 41.

Jerusalem visited by Lord Beaconsfield, 18. Influence on him, 20.

Jeaffreson, J. C., describes Lord Beaconsfield, 15. On Lord Beaconsfield's plagiarisms, 599.

Jews described in "Coningsby" as universal geniuses, 232. Removal of disabilities proposed by Lord J. Russell, 373. Attitude of Protectionists towards, *ib.* Bentinck's and Lord Beaconsfield's attitude towards contrasted 373-81. Eulogised by Lord Beaconsfield for the Crucifixion, 382-3. Unanimity in favour of Turkey, 608-9. The result of alliance in past, and common hate of Christians, *ib.* Contempt for Christian people, 613-14. Persecution in East origin of policy on Eastern question, 653.

Jolliffe, Sir W., votes against Peel, 356.

Judaism, relation to Christianity, according to Lord Beaconsfield, 381-4.

Keble, Rev. Mr., influenced by Tractarianism, 227. Unlike Lord Beaconsfield's early teachers, 228.

Kelly, Sir F., on restoration of Protection, 446.

Kennedy, Dr., head master of Shrewsbury School, 190. Supports Lord Beaconsfield's candidature, 190-91. Describes Lord Beaconsfield as a "Winchelser" scholar, 192. This statement examined, 192. Extravagantly complimented by Lord Beaconsfield, 192-3.

Kerrison, Sir E., votes against Peel, 357.

King, Mr. Locke, proposes extension of franchise in England in 1850, 412; and again in 1851, 415. Motion carried, *ib.* Effect

on the Ministry, *ib.* Bill discussed by Lord Beaconsfield, 421.
Klissura, condition of, during Bulgarian atrocities as described by MacGahan, 629; and by Baring, 640. The rising, 645.
Knatchbull, Sir E., contrasted by Lord Beaconsfield with Lord Chandos, 76. On Peel, 339, 344, 352.
Knaresborough represented by Mr. Ferrand, 259.
Knightley, Sir C., votes against Peel, 356.
Knightley, Sir R., resolution on rating franchise in counties, 566.
Kyriatz, M., on affairs of Bulgaria, 622.

Labouchere, Right Hon. H., opposed by Lord Beaconsfield, 87.
Lambeth, compound householders in, 565.
Land, Tax on, supported by Lord Beaconsfield in 1833, 65-6. This assuredly a Radical proposal, 66; and question of the hour at that period, *ib.* Interests of, extravagantly defended by Lord Beaconsfield, 75. Contrast between his tone on, at Marylebone and at Aylesbury, 76-7.
Laud eulogised by Lord J. Manners, 217.
Layard, Sir A. H., attacks Aberdeen Ministry, 481. Declares Turkey progressive, *ib.* Highly eulogised by Lord Beaconsfield, 491. Proposes vote of censure on Palmerston, 495. On hopelessness of reform in Turkey, 668.
Leader, Mr., appearance in 1837, 157.
Leeds, condition in 1843, 358.
Leinster, Duke of, on threatened famine in Ireland, 280.
Le Monnier, Sophie. Relation to Mirabeau, 673.
Lennox, Lord Henry, share in the Montefiore incident, 671.
Lennox, Lord W., Lord Beaconsfield as an opponent to, 77-8.
Lennoxes, The, vote against Peel, 356.
"Letters on the History of England" contain Whig principles, 124.
Leveson, Lord (Lord Granville). *See* Earl Granville.
Lewis, Mr. Wyndham, contests Maidstone, 150-54. Widow marries Lord Beaconsfield, 187.
Lewis, Mrs. Wyndham. *See* Viscountess Beaconsfield.
Liberals, not Whigs, 61-4. Voted against Protection, 62, 466.
Liddells, The, vote against Peel, 357.
Life of Bentinck quoted, 288, 295, 296, 298, 299, 309, 315, 321, 325, 343, 344, 345, 371, 375, 377, 381, 382, 383, 384, 388, 389, 437, 438.
Lincolnshire represented by Mr. Christopher, 446.
Lindo, D. A., admitted Lord Beaconsfield to the covenant of Abraham, 6.
Liskeard represented by C. Buller, 170.
Liverpool, Lord, ridiculed in "Coningsby," 232. A Free Trader according to Lord Beaconsfield, 257. Succeeded by Canning, 267. Peel's relations with, 328, 337-9, 344, 346-9.
Lombardy not sympathised with by Lord Beaconsfield, 392.
London, Chartists' Convention in, 182. Addressed by Lord John Russell, 280. Represented by Baron Rothschild, 373.
London Journal, The, compared with Lord Beaconsfield's novels, 235.
Long, Mr. W., votes against Peel, 357.
Longtown, Peel's effigy burned in, 210.
Lorraine, Mrs. Felix, character in "Vivian Grey," 37.
"Lothair" published, 599; analysed, *ib.* General Preface to, *see* General Preface.
Lowe, Right Hon. R., compared with C. Buller, 160; in 1837, 162. Objects to simultaneous discussion of Lord Beaconsfield's resolution and bill, 555. Ridicules Lord Beaconsfield's *pose* as Protestant champion, 585-6. Answered, 587.
Lowthers, The, vote against Peel, 356.
Luttrell: Description of Rogers and Moore, 7.

Lyle, Mr., character in "Coningsby," 237.
Lyndhurst, Lord, meets Lord Beaconsfield at Lady Blessington's, *ib.* Calls on Greville in Lord Beaconsfield's interest, 77-8. "Vindication" dedicated to, 114. One of Lord Beaconsfield's early teachers, 228.
Lynn, Lord Beaconsfield as a candidate for, 77-8. Addressed by Lord Derby, 446.
Lyttelton, Lord, fellow-student of George Smythe, 219.
Lytton, Lord (the late), a Radical, 47. Writes a letter in favour of Lord Beaconsfield, 48. Declares Lord Beaconsfield applied for his assistance as a Radical, 134. Appearance in 1837, 156. Opposes Malt Tax, 485.

Macaulay, Lord, in 137, 1861. Secretary for War, 183. On Maynooth Grant, 274. On Lord Derby's supporters in 1852, 446. On Lord Beaconsfield's Budget speech, 468.
Macaulay, Right Hon. T. B. *See* Lord Macaulay.
M'Culloch, J. R., on fixed duty, 430.
MacGahan, the late J. A., sent by *Daily News* to Bulgaria, 627; character, *ib.*; achievements, 628; death, *ib.*; account of Bulgarian atrocities, 628-38. Contrasted with Baring, 638-46.
Madden, R. R., describes Lord Beaconsfield at Lady Blessington's, 17.
Madrid: Bulwer, Sir H., expelled from, 387.
Maguire, J. F. (the late), proposes Committee on Condition of Ireland, 579.
Mahon, Lord. *See* Stanhope, Earl.
Maidstone, contested by Lord Beaconsfield, 150-154.
Maidstone Constitutional Society, addressed by Lord Beaconsfield, 150-3.
Maidstone Journal contains Colonel Thompson's address, 153-4.
Maidstone, Lord, satirised by Macaulay, 446.
Malmesbury, Earl of, vote of censure on, 441. On Free Trade, 444.
Malta, Indian troops ordered to, 663.
Manchester, speech of Lord Beaconsfield at, 597-8.
Manchester Athenæum addressed by Lord Beaconsfield, 223.
Manchester, The, School, condemned by Lord Beaconsfield, 387.
Manhood Suffrage demanded in National Petition, 180.
Manini, 382.
Manners, Lord John, returned to Parliament, 214. An apostle of Young Englandism, *ib.* Publishes poems, *ib.* Those poems analyzed, 215-18. Fellow-student of George Smythe, 219. Rebuked by his father for his friendship with Lord Beaconsfield, 222-3. Faith in Young Englandism intelligible, 226-7. Relations with Lord Beaconsfield discussed by *Fortnightly Review*, 236. On restoration of Protection, 446.
Manners, The, vote against Peel, 356.
Manning, Cardinal, student of Oxford, 227. Influenced by Tractarianism, *ib.* Unlike Lord Beaconsfield's early teachers, 228.
Manstein a disguise for "Vivian Grey," 21.
Marney, character in "Sybil," 242.
Marylebone addressed by Lord Beaconsfield as a Radical, 65. Lord Beaconsfield at, contrasted with Lord Beaconsfield at Aylesbury, 76-7. The Kennel orators of, 117.
Mather, Mr., case discussed in Parliament, 441.
Maule, Mr. Fox (Lord Panmure), attacks Lord Beaconsfield, 182. Answered, 183.
Maynooth, Peel's grant to, 273-7.
Mayo, Earl of, defeats Russell Ministry, 418. Announces Lord Beaconsfield's Irish policy, 579. Disavowed, 580.
Mazzini in England, 263. Letters opened, *ib.* Relations with Stansfeld, 540-42.
Melbourne, Viscount, meets Lord Beaconsfield in youth, 23-4. Premier, 70. Again Premier, 87.

Attacked by "Runnymede," 145. Position in 1837, 162; and in 1842, 185. Defeated at general election, 202. Confidence of Queen brought forward in favour of, 205. Preference of Queen for his Cabinet, 205. Succeeded by Peel, 520.
"Memoirs of Peel" quoted, 210-11.
Meredith, Mr., betrothed to Miss D'Israeli, 3. Death, 4.
Meredith, Mr. W., uncle of Miss D'Israeli's betrothed, 3.
Midhurst represented by Walpole, 446.
Miles, W., proposes motion on agriculture, 270. Flattered by Lord Beaconsfield, 298. Votes against Peel, 357. Remains faithful to Protection, 466, though deserted by Lord Beaconsfield, 367.
Mill, James, vehemently opposes the Whigs, though a Liberal, 62.
Mill, John S., vehemently opposes Whigs, though a Liberal, 62. Quoted by Lord Beaconsfield as favourable to Protection, 310. The misrepresentation exposed by Roebuck, 311-12.
Millbank, character in "Coningsby," 239. Described by Smythe, 225.
Milton, Lord Beaconsfield compares himself to, 84-5.
Mirabeau, described by Mr. Smythe, 225. Contrasted with Lord Beaconsfield, 673.
Mirror of Parliament quoted, 337, 338, 344, 349, 350, 351, 352.
Mohammedans, relation to Jews, 608-9. Affinity of both described by Lord Beaconsfield, 610.
Molesworth, Sir W., appearance in 1837, 157.
Molesworth, W. N., quoted, 410-11, 421, 521-2, 525.
Moltke, Count, a character in "Contarini Fleming," 21.
Monmouth, Lord, stands for Lord Hertford in "Coningsby," 229. Contrasted with Lord Steyne, 230, 240.
Montefiore, Sir M., greets Lord Beaconsfield on return from Berlin, 671.
Montenegro requested by Lord Beaconsfield's Government to assist in putting down Bosnian insurrection, 616-17.
Moore, T., described by Luttrell, 7. Guest of Lady Blessington, 13.
Morning Chronicle attacks Lord Beaconsfield, 88-9. Addressed by Westminster elector, 88, 98-9. Its comments, 100. Contains letter from Mr. Ronayne, 102. Verses in, on Lord Beaconsfield, 111. Reports Lord Beaconsfield's maiden speech, 167; and ridicules, 174-5. Purchased by friends of Peel, 223. Joined by George Smythe, *ib.* Quotes "Coningsby,' 241. Quoted, 351. On Protectionist leadership, 391-2. On Lord Beaconsfield's appointment for the first time as Chancellor of the Exchequer, 423. Quoted, 452-5.
Morning Journal, quoted, 351-2.
Morning Post, speech of Lord Beaconsfield in, 173. On Lord Beaconsfield's maiden speech, 170-74. Compared with Lord Beaconsfield's novels, 235. Quotes "Coningsby," 241. Quoted, 351. On Lord Beaconsfield's first appointment as Chancellor of the Exchequer, 424.
Morning Star, quoted, 542.
Morny, M. de, guest of Lady Blessington, 13. One of Lord Beaconsfield's early teachers, 228.
Morpeth, Lord (Earl of Carlisle), appearance in 1837, 155-6. Defends Peel, 354.
Mounteney, character in "Vivian Grey," 36.
Mowbray, character in "Sybil," 242.
Naas, Lord. *See* Earl of Mayo.
Napier, Sir C., appealed to by Lord Beaconsfield, 291
Naples, King of, defended by Lord Beaconsfield, 392, 410.
Napoleon Louis (Emperor of the French), alliance with, recommended by Lord Beaconsfield, 479. Attacked by Graham and Wood, 491.
National Petition presented, 179. Demands, 180-81.
Navigation Laws, Lord Beaconsfield on, 385. Abolition opposed by Tories, 393-4.

Newark represented by Mr. Gladstone, 161.
Newcastle, Duke of, Minister for War, 492. Blamed for Crimean disasters, *ib.* Supercession proposed by Russell, *ib.* Sacrificed for mistakes in Crimea, 501.
Newdegate, Mr., votes against Peel, 357. Referred to in *Morning Chronicle*, 391. Remains faithful to Protection, 466; although deserted by Lord Beaconsfield, 467. Quotes Lord Beaconsfield against Emancipation of Jews, 522-3.
Newman, Dr., influenced by Tractarianism, 227. Unlike Lord Beaconsfield's early teachers, 228.
Nineteenth Century, contains article by Rae, 99-100; and by Gladstone, 660-61.
Northcote, Sir S., on Pigott case, 607-8.
Northern Star edited by F. O'Connor, 242.
North, Lord, Ministry of, introduced in "Venetia," 199.
North Wilts represented by Sir F. Burdett, 164.
Norton, Hon. Mrs., brings Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Melbourne together, 23-4.
Norton, Lord (Sir C. Adderley), on relations with Canada, 538. On Reform Bill of '67, 571.
Nottingham represented by Mr. Osborne, 585.
"Novels and Novelists." *See* J. C. Jeaffreson.

O'Brien, Mr. Smith, introduces motion on Spottiswoode Subscription, 164. Opposes Coercion Bill, 305; seeks coalition with Protectionists, 385-6.
O'Connell, D., writes a letter in favour of Lord Beaconsfield, 48-9. Vehement opponent of Whigs, 62. Member of Westminster Reform Club, 100. Attacked by Lord Beaconsfield, 100-101. Replies, 102-5. His duel with D'Esterre, 106. Addressed in an insulting letter by Lord Beaconsfield, 108-12. Attacked in "Vindication," 117. His relations with Lord Beaconsfield discussed in *Globe* controversy, 127-35. Lord Beaconsfield gives a new version of those relations, 129-32. Inaccuracy of this version, 132-5; another version of their relations, 151-3; inaccuracy of this version also, *ib.* Appearance in 1837, 158. Attacked by Sir F. Burdett, 165. Replies, *ib.* Attacked by Lord Beaconsfield, 166. Agitation for Repeal of Union, 252. Opposes Peel's Coercion Bill, 304-5. Relations with Lord Beaconsfield alluded to by Roebuck, 311; and by Hall, 413. Called by Lord Beaconsfield a great man, 312. This estimate contrasted with others, 312-13.
O'Connell, M., fights Lord Alvanley, 106-7. Challenged by Lord Beaconsfield, 107. Declines challenge, 107-8.
O'Connor, F., member of Westminster Reform Club, 100. Correspondence submitted to Lord Beaconsfield, 242.
Orators of the age. *See* Francis, G. H.
Orsay, Count D', companion of Lady Blessington, 11-12. Character, 12-13. In conversation with Lord Beaconsfield, 16. "Henrietta Temple" dedicated to, 198. One of Lord Beaconsfield's early teachers, 228.
Orsini, attempts life of Napoleon, 516.
Osborne, Mr. Bernal, son of Mr. Bernal, 159. On tactics of Lord Beaconsfield in 1852, 434-5. Attacks Lord Beaconsfield's desertion of Protection, 461-2. On the Irish policy of Lord Beaconsfield, 585. On the Stanley Amendment, *ib.*
Oswald, Mr., attacks the denouncers of Peel, 433.
Otluk-Kui, or Panugurishti, the massacre at, as described by Dupuis, 622-3; by MacGahan, 630-31; and by Baring, 640-41; the rising, 644-5.
Oude, annexation of, 515.
Outram, Sir J., objects to Lord Canning's proclamation, 521.
Oxford University attended by Pusey, 227; Keble, *ib.* Froude,

ib.; Williams, *ib.*; Newman, *ib.*; and Manning, *ib.* Influenced by Tractarian movement, *ib.*

Pall Mall Gazette, The, on Alarcos, 201.

Palmerston, Lord, attacked by "Runnymede," 146-7. Appearance in 1837, 155. Opposes fusion of consular and diplomatic service, 207. Satirizes Lord Beaconsfield, *ib.* Answered, *ib.* Asks for Servian papers, 250. Blamed by Mrs. Canning for joining Wellington, 328. Defends Lord Beaconsfield, 252. Protests against Spanish marriages, 364; and annexation of Cracow, 365. Attacked by Protectionist leaders, 364-5. Defended by Peel, Sandon, Mahon, and Hume, 365. Prussian policy approved by Lord Beaconsfield, 387. Foreign policy censured, 407; defends himself, 408. Dismissed from the Russell Government, 419. Explains, 420. Proposes amendment to Russell's Militia Bill, 422. Proposes amendment to Villiers' resolution, 460. Effect of the motion, 461. Home Secretary, 478. Proposed as successor to Newcastle, 492. Offered leadership of Commons by Derby, 492-3. Refuses, *ib.* Premier, 493. Attacked by Lord Beaconsfield, 493-4. Accepts Roebuck committee, 494. Proposed vote of censure, 495; on Vienna Congress, *ib.* Another vote of censure, 496-7. Victorious, 497. Again assailed by Lord Beaconsfield, 497-8. Denounced by Bright and Cobden, 498. Defended by Prince Albert, 499-500. Attacked by Roebuck, 500; and Lord Beaconsfield, 501; but defended by prominent Conservatives, *ib.* Italian policy attacked by Lord Beaconsfield, 502. Involved with China and Persia, 503. Denounced by Lord Beaconsfield for Russophobia, 504-51. Defeated on Cobden's motion, 506. Appeals to the country, *ib.* Accused by Lord Beaconsfield of aggressive foreign policy, 506-10. Obtains large majority, 511. Attacked by Lord Beaconsfield during Indian Mutiny, 512-13; but supported strongly by House of Commons, 513. Again accused by Lord Beaconsfield of aggressive foreign policy, 514-15. Proposes Conspiracy Bill, 516; defeated and resigns, *ib.* Indian Bill taken up by Lord Beaconsfield, 517, 519. Appealed to, by Mr. Walpole, 524. Position from '60 to '65, 526-7. His foreign policy again attacked by Lord Beaconsfield, 535. Accused by Lord Beaconsfield of degrading the House of Commons, 539. Conduct of Lord Beaconsfield to, estimated, 546-7. Death, 547. Influence on Lord Beaconsfield's policy towards Russia, 615.

Panagurishti, *see* Otluk-Kui.

Parliament dissolved, 57, 187, 367. Suddenly summoned, 163, 371, 445, 491.

Parliamentary government denounced in "Coningsby," 233-4.

Pears, Mr., correspondent of *Daily News* at Constantinople, 627.

Peel, Sir L., on Sir Robert Peel, 211.

Peel, Sir R. (the late), called to power, 70. Strongly supported by Lord Beaconsfield, 80-81. Dismissed, 87. Defended in "Vindication" for deserting Tory principles, 125-6. Eulogised by "Runnymede," 147-9. Appearance in 1837, 156. Cheers Lord Beaconsfield's maiden speech, 175-6. Eulogised by Lord Beaconsfield, 184. Position in 1841, 185. Again eulogised by Lord Beaconsfield, 185-6. Proposes vote of censure on Melbourne Ministry, 186. Approaching office, *ib.*; and therefore again eulogised by Lord Beaconsfield, 186-7. Described by Lord Beaconsfield as the greatest statesman of his age, 193. Again eulogised by Lord Beaconsfield, 195-6; who describes himself as a fervent but humble supporter, 195. Why this adulation? 196-7. Premier, 206. Confers no office on Lord Beaconsfield, *ib.* Condemns Lord Beaconsfield's mo-

tion on diplomatic service, 207. Introduces a new Corn Law, 208. This proved a step in direction of Free Trade, by his own speeches, 208-9; by those of his opponents, 209-10; and by his Memoirs, 210-11; yet strongly supported by Lord Beaconsfield, 212-13. Acquitted by Lord Beaconsfield of inconsistency, *ib.* Coldly receives Mr. Disraeli's advances, 214. Described in "Coningsby" as a "distinguished personage," 232; as a "great man in a great position," *ib.* Acquitted of intrigue, *ib.* Still receives Lord Beaconsfield coldly, 248-9. First attacked by Lord Beaconsfield, 249-50. Again attacked by Lord Beaconsfield, 250-51. Adopts an unwise Irish policy, 252-3. Again eulogised by Lord Beaconsfield, 256-8. A painful scene with Cobden, 261-2. Allusion to the scene by Lord Beaconsfield, *ib.* Accused by Lord Beaconsfield of hypocrisy, 264; and of selecting as a colleague a confederate of Despard, 265. Completely disproves this charge, 265-6. Accused by Lord Beaconsfield of tyranny to his supporters, 267; of stealing Whig principles, *ib.*; and of treachery to Canning, 268. Replies, 268-9. Charged by Lord Beaconsfield with deserting the agriculturists, 270-71. Quotes Lord Beaconsfield's former eulogies, 272, and dismisses him with contempt, 272-3. Proposes Maynooth Grant, 273. Again attacked by Lord Beaconsfield, 274-7. Conduct in '45 estimated, 277-8. Position in '46, 279-85. Determines to abandon Protection, 285-6. Organization of the Opposition, 287. Speech of Explanation, *ib.* Charged by Lord Beaconsfield with treachery, 290-92; and with want of true statesmanship, 292. An innocent phrase misrepresented by Lord Beaconsfield, 294-5. Introduces Free Trade Bill, 297. Organised Protectionist opposition, 297-8. Again charged by Lord Beaconsfield with treachery, 298; and again reminded of his collision with Cobden, 301. Apologises to Cobden, *ib.* Introduces Coercion Bill, 303. Again misrepresented by Lord Beaconsfield, 307-9, and again attacked 316. Makes a stinging reply, 316-17. Conspiracy against him, 320-23. Accused by Bentinck of treachery to Canning and of falsehood, 326-7. Repudiates charges, 332-3. Charges renewed by Lord Beaconsfield, 333-45; although acquitted by Lord Beaconsfield of same charges previously, 343-4. Completely refutes charges, 345-54. Explanation declared satisfactory by all parties, 354-5. Resigns, 355. Duel with Lord Beaconsfield estimated, 356-9. Effect of fall on parties, 360. Supports abolition of protection on sugar, 361. Approves of Palmerston's Russian policy, 365. Opposes Lord Beaconsfield's motion on State of the Nation, 399. Frequently attacked by Lord Beaconsfield since '46, 399-400. Denounced by Mr. Cheetham, 400-401. Opposes Lord Beaconsfield's motion for reducing county taxation, 405. Last appearance in the House of Commons, 408; character of the appearance, *ib.* On Palmerston's foreign policy, 408-9. Divides with Lord Beaconsfield, 410. Death, 410-11. Effect on Lord Beaconsfield's fortunes, 411-12. Memory defended by Herbert, 463-4.

Peel, General, denounces Lord Beaconsfield for embarrassing the Government, 489-90. Proposes motion in favour of Palmerston, 501. Resigns, 556. On Reform Bill of '67, 557, 561.

Peelites oppose Bentinck's Irish scheme, 364. In new Parliament, 371. Offered alliance by Lord John Russell, 415; refuse, 416. Offered alliance by Protectionists, 416-17 *ib.*; refuse, *ib.* In New Parliament, 371. Opposed Lord Beaconsfield's Budget, 471.

Peerage Bill, account of, in "Vindication," 118-20. Described as

defeated by Tories, 118. Really defeated by Whigs, 118-20.
"Pencillings by the Way," description of Lord Beaconsfield in, 15-17.
Penzance, Lord, fellow-student of George Smythe, 219.
Perry, Mr., opposes Lord Beaconsfield at Maidstone, 154.
Perry, Sir E., supports Lord Beaconsfield's action on Indian Mutiny, 513.
Persia, war with, 503, 508-10.
Perustitza, the massacre at, during Bulgarian atrocities as described by MacGahan, 631-3; and by Baring, 641; the rising, 644-6.
Pestera, condition of, during Bulgarian atrocities as described by MacGahan, 633-4.
Philippopolis, Lord Beaconsfield's gross mistake as to, 620-21. State of, during Bulgarian atrocities, 622.
Picciotto, Mr., on date of Lord Beaconsfield's birth, 1. On relations of the Disraeli family with Judaism, 5-6.
Pigott, Mr. T. D., appointed by Lord Beaconsfield, 605-8.
Pigott, Rev. Mr., relations with Lord Beaconsfield, 606-8.
Pitt, William, eulogised in "Vindication," 120. Described by Lord Beaconsfield as father of Free Trade, 213, 257.
Plumptre, Mr., in 1837, 160.
"Political adventures of Lord Beaconsfield." See *Fortnightly Review*.
"Popanilla" published, 17. Its character, *ib.*
Prentice, Mr., quoted, 209.
Protection an issue in 1841 election, 202. Not a Conservative cry, according to Lord Beaconsfield, 204. This statement contrasted with later statement, *ib.* Partially abandoned by Peel in '41, 209; with approval of Lord Beaconsfield, 212-13; though afterwards condemned by same person, 212. Peel and Russell's position towards, contrasted, 281-3. Abandoned by Peel, 286. Lord Beaconsfield claims constancy to 289 This claim examined, *ib.* Party organised, 297-8. Lord Beaconsfield's adoption inconsistent with teaching in '42, 299. Lord Beaconsfield's attitude towards, 368. Attempt to immediately restore condemned by Lord Beaconsfield, 368-9. His next move on, 395. Reciprocity proposed by him as substitute, 398-9. Finally betrayed by Lord Beaconsfield, 461.
Protectionists, burn Peel in effigy in 1841, 210. Abandoned by Peel, 286. Raise stormy agitation, *ib.* Formed into a party, 297-8. Support Whig Ministry, 360. Split with Peel maintained by Lord Beaconsfield, 361. Pass over to Opposition benches, 362; but continue friendly to Whigs, 363. Split on Bentinck's Irish scheme, 364. In new Parliament, 371. Attitude on Jewish Disabilities, 373. Consequent difficulties with leaders, 374-81. Their final betrayal by Lord Beaconsfield, 466. Raise violent agitation for reversal free trade, 400-401. Propose amendment to address, 401. Nature of the amendment, 401-2. Finally betrayed by Lord Beaconsfield, 461.
Prussia consents to annexation of Cracow, 365. Policy to Schleswig-Holstein, 387.
Public Worship Bill introduced by Mr. Gurney, 602. Strongly supported by Lord Beaconsfield, 603-4. Effects, 604-5.
Punjaub, rebellion in, 393.
Pusey a student at Oxford, 227. Influenced by Tractarianism, *ib.* Unlike Lord Beaconsfield's earl[illegible] teachers, 228.

Queen, name of, used in 1841 election, 205. Such use advocated in "Vindication" by Lord Beaconsfield, *ib.*; yet condemned in Whigs, 205-6. Issues declaration of war with Russia, 482. Selects Lord Beaconsfield as Premier, 578. Represented by Lord Beaconsfield as hostile to attack on Irish Church, 589; and as responsible for his continuance in power, 592-3. This repre-

sentation discussed in Commons, 592-6.

Raddovo, or Radilovo, condition of, during Bulgarian atrocities as described by Mr. MacGahan, 629; and by Mr. Baring, 639. The rising, 644.
Radicals correspond to Reformers of '32, 46. Run candidates in opposition to Whigs, 46-7. Supported Lord Beaconsfield, 54-5. Coalition of, with Tories advocated by Lord Beaconsfield, 68. Abandoned by Lord Beaconsfield, 86-7. Attitude in 1837, 162-3. In new Parliament, 371.
Rae, Mr. W. F., describes formation of Reform Club, 99-100.
Ragusa, English Consul in, 620.
Rasim Bey, one of the heroes of Bulgarian atrocities, 623.
Rates, Church, modification of, proposed by Lord Beaconsfield, 80.
Rathcormack, tithe massacre at, 91-2.
Reade, Consul, on arming of Circassians, 623-5.
Reciprocity proposed as substitute for Protection, 398-9.
Redistribution Bill introduced by Mr. Gladstone, 549; carried, 549-50.
Reform Bill. That of 1832 differently regarded by Reformers and Whigs, 44-5. Effect on parties, 162-3. Introduced in 1852, 420; in 1859, 523-5; and in 1860, 533. Neglected in 1861, 534-5. Again introduced in 1865, 547. Extensive agitation in favour of, 550. Never opposed by Conservatives, according to Lord Beaconsfield, 552. Resolutions on proposed by Lord Beaconsfield, 553; but a £6 bill substituted, 554-5. This also dropped, 556; and household suffrage substituted, 557.
Reformers of '32 correspond to our Radicals, 46. Run candidates in opposition to Whigs, 46-7. Supported by Lord Beaconsfield, 54-5.
Reid, Mr., in the Stationery Office, 606.
"Revolutionary Epick" published, 83. Its extraordinary Preface, 83-5. Its character, 85-6. Said by Bright to advocate private assassination, 542. New edition published, 543. Passages garbled, *ib.* Dedication to Lord Derby, 544.
Rice, Spring, appearance in 1837, 156.
Richmond, Duke of (the late), opposes the Corn Law of 1841, 210; which Lord Beaconsfield approved, 212-13; afterwards used by Lord Beaconsfield against Peel, 212. Leads opposition to Peel in '46, 286. Intentions on Reform as described by Lord Beaconsfield, 552.
Richmond, Duke of (the present), on Queen's part in Irish Church agitation, 594.
Richmond and Twickenham Times, letter in, from H. G. Bohn, 3-4.
Rigby, Mr., stands for J. W. Croker in "Coningsby," 229, 241.
Ripperda, object of Lord Beaconsfield's early admiration, 25.
"Rise of Iskander" published, 41.
Ritualism advocated by Lord J. Manners, 214-16, 218; by G. Smythe, 219-23; and by Lord Beaconsfield, 243-4. Afterwards denounced by Lord Beaconsfield, 603.
Ritualists accused by Lord Beaconsfield of conspiracy with Catholics, 586-7. Denounced by Lord Beaconsfield, 603; though formerly strongly supported, 603-4.
Roebuck, Mr. J. A., contests Bath as a Radical, 46-7. A Liberal in 1832, though a vehement opponent of Whigs, 62. Appearance in 1837, 161. Attacked by Lord Beaconsfield, 301. Attacks Lord Beaconsfield, 310-12. Defends Peel, 355. Congratulates Lord Beaconsfield on attaining to leadership, 397. Attacks Lord Beaconsfield for his constant denunciations of Peel, 399-400. Moves vote of confidence in the Russell Ministry, 407. Proposes Sebastopol committee, 492. Motion carried, *ib.* Committee accepted, 494; proposes vote of censure on conduct of war, 500-1.
Rogers, S., said to have had Lord Beaconsfield baptized, 7. De-

scribed by Luttrell, *ib.* Guest of Lady Blessington, 13. A teacher of Lord Beaconsfield's youth, 228.
Rolfe, Mr. J., proposes Lord Beaconsfield's health, 74.
Ronayne, Mr., letter to the *Morning Chronicle*, 102.
Rothschild, Baron, elected for London, 373.
Runnymede Letters, 145-9.
Russell, Lord John, attacked by Runnymede, 146. Appearance in 1837, 154-5; and position, 162. Proposes Education Grant, 179. Position in 1841, 185. Introduces motion on state of Ireland, 253. Eulogised by Lord Beaconsfield, 256. Why? 255-6. *Fortnightly Review* on Lord Beaconsfield's contradictory estimates of, 258-9. Supports Maynooth Grant, 273-4. Denounces Corn Law, 280. Position on question contrasted with Peel's, 280-83. Less popular with some Liberals than Peel, 285. Fails to form Ministry, 286. Speech of explanation, 287. Opposes Peel's introduction of Coercion Bill, 305. But supports first reading, 309. Defends Peel, 354. Proposes abolition of protection on sugar, 360. Opposes Bentinck's Irish scheme, 363. Introduces Irish Coercion Bill, 372. Proposes removal of Jewish disabilities, 373. Blamed by Lord Beaconsfield for so doing, 379. Recognizes leadership of Lord Beaconsfield, 397. Attacks Lord Beaconsfield for duplicity, 404. On censure of Palmerston's foreign policy, 407. Death of Peel, 411. Effect on, *ib.* On extension of the Irish franchise, 412. Introduces Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, 413. Defeated, 415. Tenders resignation, *ib.* Effect on the Ministry, 413-14. Opposed by Aberdeen and Graham, 416. Resumes office, 418. Dismisses Palmerston, 419. Explains, 420. Introduces Reform Bill, *ib.* Introduces Militia Bill, 422. Defeated, *ib.* Resigns, 423. On policy of Lord Derby's Government, 427. On Lord Beaconsfield's speech, 431-3. On dissolution of Parliament, 434. Again attacks Derby-Disraeli Ministry, 441-2. Foreign Secretary, 478. Denounces embarrassment of Government by opposition, 486. Introduces Bill for abolition of Oaths, 490. Attacks Lord Beaconsfield, 491. Proposes supersession of Newcastle, 492. Resigns, *ib.* Asked to form new Government, 493. Failed, *ib.* English representative at Vienna, 494. Returns to London, *ib.* On Vienna Congress, 496. Resigns, 497. Supports Cobden's vote of censure on China war, 505. Proposes vote of confidence in Palmerston, 513. Rescues Lord Beaconsfield's Indian Bill, 518-19; and opposes his Reform Bill, 524. Introduces Reform Bill of 1860, 534. Premier, 547. Introduces Reform Bill, *ib.* Resigns, 550.
Russia, subject of questions by Lord Beaconsfield, 249, 251. Consents to annexation of Cracow, 365. England's declaration of war against, 482. Hatred towards the winning game in England, 615. Joins in Andrassy Note, 617; and in Berlin Memorandum, 618. Declares war against Turkey, 657; thwarted by Lord Beaconsfield, 658; victorious, *ib.*
Rutland, Duke of, condemns friendship of his son (Lord J. Manners) and Smythe with Lord Beaconsfield, 222-3. Yet flattered under name of Beaumanoir in "Coningsby," 234.

Salisbury, Marquis of, in 1837, 162. Supports motion in favour of Palmerston, 501. Resigns, 556. On Household Suffrage Bill, 557. On Mr. Gladstone's demands, 567-8. Protests against enfranchisement of compound householder, 569. Pronounces vehement invective against Lord Beaconsfield, 571-4. Denounces Lord Beaconsfield for equivocation on Irish Church, 584-5. Attacked by Lord Beaconsfield on Public Worship Act, 603. Sent to Constantinople Conference, 656. On Memorandum with Schouvaloff, 665. Entry

into London after Berlin Treaty, 669. On hopelessness of reforms in Turkey, 668.
Salopian Journal reports Dr. Kennedy, 192; and challenge of Lord Beaconsfield by Mr. Yardley, 193. Admires Lord Beaconsfield's crest, 194.
San Stefano, Treaty of, 663-5.
Sandon, Lord, attacks Lord Beaconsfield, 252. Approves Palmerston's Russian policy, 365.
Saracens' relations with the Jews, 610-11.
Sardinia, not sympathized with by Lord Beaconsfield, 392.
Sarsfield discussed at Lady Blessington's, 17.
Schleswig-Holstein, 387.
Schouvaloff, Count, share in negotiations after Berlin Memorandum, 651.
Schuyler, Mr. E., on Bulgarian atrocities, 638-9; one of the Liberators of the East, *ib.*; on the Batak massacre, 641.
Scotsman, the, reports Edinburgh speech of Lord Beaconsfield, 575; this contrasted with official report, 577-8.
Scott, Mr. Walter, on dispute between Lord Beaconsfield and *Globe*, 136.
Sedley, Taylor, on Eastern Question, 617 *et seq.* On negotations after Berlin Memorandum 50.
Semitic, The, principle, 383.
Servia supplies *casus belli* between Lord Beaconsfield and Peel, 250. Requested by Beaconsfield Ministry to assist in putting down Bosnian insurrection, 616-17. Denounced by Lord Beaconsfield 649-51, 655-6.
Sidmouth, Lord, ridiculed in "Coningsby," 232.
Sidonia, a character in "Coningsby," 232-3.
Sheahan, Mr., quoted, 44.
Sheffield, condition of in 1843, 358.
Shelley, P. B., as portrayed in "Venetia," 198-200.
Shiel, Col., 509.
Shiel, R. L., appearance in 1837, 158.
houvaloff, Count, 651.
hrewsbury contested by Lord Beaconsfield, 257-8. Addressed by Lord Beaconsfield, 188-195.
Shrewsbury Chronicle reports Lord Beaconsfield's speech, 188. Describes Mrs. Disraeli's share in Shrewsbury election, 194.
Shrewsbury News reports speeches of Dr. Kennedy, 192, and of Lord Beaconsfield, 193. Ridicules the latter's crest, 194.
Shropshire Conservative reports Lord Beaconsfield's address, 189-90, 195-6. Charges Peel with deserting Protection, 258. Answered by Lord Beaconsfield, *ib.*
Sicily not sympathized with by Lord Beaconsfield, 392, 410.
"Sketches in London," *see* Grant, James.
Slough, speech of Lord Beaconsfield at, 521-2.
Small Tenements Act effect, 564-5; and application, 565.
Smith, Hon. R., member for High Wycombe, 44. Receives letter from J. Hume, 49-50. Again elected, 61; and again, 82.
Smith, Horace, guest of Lady Blessington, 13.
Smith, Sydney, compared with C. Buller, 160.
Smith, Mr. Goldwin, on "Lothair," 600-601.
Smith, Vernon, Mr., replies to Lord Beaconsfield's attack on Canning, 512. Again replies, 512-13.
Smythe, G. S. (afterwards Lord Strangford), elected to Parliament, 214. An apostle of Young Englandism, *ib.* Birth and education, 218-19. Reasons for joining Young England party, 219-20. Separates from Lord Beaconsfield and Lord John Manners, 220. Want of energy in Parliament, 220-21. Refuses office, 221. Nature of friendship with Lord Beaconsfield, 221-24. Warned against this friendship, 222-23. Joins *Morning Chronicle*, 223. Succeeds to his title, 224. Dies, *ib.* Estimate of his life, *ib.* Analysis of his works, 224-5. Hopes and aims in joining the Tory party, 225. Faith in Young Englandism intelligible,

226-7. Defends Lord Beaconsfield, 252. On Lord Beaconsfield's plagiarism from Thiers, 453-5.
Somerset, Captain, remains faithful to Protection, 466; although deserted by Lord Beaconsfield, 467.
Somersets, The, vote against Peel, 356.
Somerville, Sir W., opposes introduction of Coercion Bill, 305; and second reading, 324-5.
Southern Reporter contains account of Rathcormack massacre, 91.
Spectator, The, on quarrel between Lord Beaconsfield and O'Connell, 108-10. On Lord Beaconsfield's first appointment as Chancellor of the Exchequer, 424. Quoted, 429. On Bulgarian atrocities, 627. On Russian declaration of war, 657.
Spooner, Mr., alluded to by *Morning Chronicle*, 391.
Spottiswoode Subscription, character of, 163-4. Subscribed to by Sir F. Burdett, 164. Brought before the House of Commons, *ib.* Defended by Lord Beaconsfield, 166-70.
St. Andrew's Holborn, Lord Beaconsfield baptized at, 8-9.
St. Cyr, Marshal de, eulogium of Thiers on, 452-6.
St. Lys, character in "Sybil," 243-4.
Stafford, Mr., flattered by Lord Beaconsfield, 298-9. Alluded to by *Morning Chronicle*, 391.
Stafford, Lord, eulogised by Lord J. Manners, 217.
Stamford represented by Lord Salisbury, 586.
Standard, The, does not notice Lord Beaconsfield's maiden speech, 173.
Stanhope, Earl, the late, on Peerage Bill, 119-20. "Memoirs of Peel" quoted, 211. Supports Palmerston's Russian policy, 365.
Stanley, Lord, *see* late Lord Derby.
Stansfeld, Rt. Hon. J., involved in a dispute about Mazzini, 540-41. Denounced by Lord Beaconsfield, 541. Result of the attack, 542-3.
Stapylton Toad, character in "Vivian Grey," 36.
"Steyne, Marquis of," contrasted with Lord Monmouth, 230.
Stockholm, Lord Strangford (6th) minister at, 218. Birthplace of George Smythe, *ib.*
Stockport rejects Cobden, 162. Represented by Cobden, 271.
Strangford, Lady, on George Smythe, 219-224; and Young England, 219-20.
Strangford, Lord (6th), father of George Smythe, 218. Minister at Stockholm, *ib.* Death, 224.
Strangford, Lord (7th). *See* Smythe, G. S.
Sugar Duties discussed in Parliament, 185-6, 360-61.
Sugden, Sir E. (Lord St. Leonards), appearance in 1837, 159.
Sunderland, Lord, introduces Peerage Bill, 118-19. Defeated by Whigs, 119-20.
Suspensory Bill, *see* Irish Church.
"Sybil" published, 241. Object, 241-2. *Dramatis personæ*, 242-3. Recalls with regret days of the Abbots, 243. Highly praises Ritualism, 243-4. Descriptions of the working classes mere daubs, 244-5. Represents Young Englandism in "Egremont," 245. Describes aristocrats as natural leaders of the people, 245-6. Self-laudation of author, 246-7.

Talfourd, Serjt., introduces Copyright Bill, 179.
Tamworth represented by Peel, 185.
"Tancred" published, 381. On relations of Jews and Mohammedans, 611. On superiority of Jews to Christians, 614. Dreams realised in Lord Beaconsfield's Premiership, 666-7.
Tatar-Bazardjik, *see* Bazardjik.
Taunton, contested by Mr. Labouchere and Lord Beaconsfield, 87-99, 134.
Taunton Courier, describes Lord Beaconsfield as a Conservative, 87. Its accuracy doubted, 88. But afterwards proved, 88-97.
"Taxes on knowledge" condemned by Lord Beaconsfield, 59, 61, 65.
Taylor, Mr. P. A., defends Stansfeld's relations with Mazzini, 541.

Taylor, T., guest of Mr. W. Meredith, 3.
Teheran, 509.
Thackeray, W. M., contrasted with Lord Beaconsfield, 230. Criticises "Coningsby," 240-41.
"The Crisis Examined" published, 79. Advocates immediate abolition of Irish Tithes, *ib.*; reduction of the Irish Church, 79-80; modification of Church Rates, 80; strongly defends Peel from charge of tergiversation, 80-81; and compares Ministry to Ducrow, 81-2.
"The British Senate," *see* Grant, James.
Thiers, M., essay stolen by Lord Beaconsfield, 452-6.
Thimbleby, Rev. J., baptized Lord Beaconsfield, 9.
Thompson. Alderman, votes against Peel, 357. Remains faithful to Protection, 466; although deserted by Lord Beaconsfield, 467.
Thompson, Colonel (afterwards General), member of Westminster Reform Club, 100. Opposes Lord Beaconsfield at Maidstone, 151-4. Their principles compared, 153-4. Defeated, 154.
Times, The, contains letter of Lord Beaconsfield, 57; and election address, 58-60. Report of the Rathcormack massacre, 91-2. Contains letter of Lord Beaconsfield, 129, 135, 141, 143. Publishes "Runnymede Letters," 145-149. Quoted, 151. Praises Lord Beaconsfield's maiden speech, 174. Quotes "Coningsby," 241. Quoted, 340, 344, 350, 351, 352. On Protectionist leadership, 392. On Lord Beaconsfield's first appointment as Chancellor of the Exchequer, 423 4. On his plagiarism from Thiers, 454-6. Denies report of his resignation, 479.
Tirnova, condition during Bulgarian atrocities, 625.
Tithes, Irish, strongly denounced by Lord Beaconsfield, 79. Strongly defended by Lord Beaconsfield, 90; though they had just caused a bloody conflict, 91-2. The Rathcormack massacre, *ib.*
Tomline, Mr., contests Shrewsbury along with Lord Beaconsfield, 188-95. Elected, 195.
Tories support Lord Beaconsfield 54. Coalition of, with Radicals advocated by Lord Beaconsfield, 68. Credited in "Vindication" with defeating the Peerage Bill, 118. The credit undeserved, 118-20. Induced to desert principles by Bolingbroke, 123. Attitude in 1837, 163. The real Free Traders according to Lord Beaconsfield, 203. This statement contrasted with later statements, 204. Those of Liverpool's time satirized in "Coningsby," 231-2. Described by Lord Beaconsfield as apostles of retrenchment, 393. Never opposed to Reform, according to Lord Beaconsfield, 551-2. This statement examined, 552-3.
Torrens, Mr. W. M'C., describes Lord Beaconsfield at Mrs. Norton's, 23-4.
Tower Hamlets represented by Mr. Ayrton, 593-4.
Tractarianism begat Young Englandism, 226. Influences Oxford's leading men, 227.
"Treatise on Taxation," *see* M'Culloch.
Trevelyan, Mr., Life of Macaulay. *See* Lord Macaulay.
Triennial Parliaments supported by Lord Beaconsfield, 57, 59, 61. Again supported by him, 65. And again, 68. Dropped, 79. Advocated by Col. Thompson, 153; who was opposed by Lord Beaconsfield, *ib.* Again opposed by him, 181.
Trollope, Sir J., votes against Peel, 357. Referred to in *Morning Chronicle*, 391.
True Sun attacks Lord Beaconsfield, 110-11.
Turkey, Lord Beaconsfield's constancy to, 251. Strongly defended by Sir A. Layard, 481. Unanimity of Jews in favour of, 608-9. The result of alliance in past, and common hate of Christians, *ib.* Accepts intervention of Consuls in Bosnian insurrection, 617. The *status quo* advocated by Lord

Beaconsfield, *ib.* The Andrassy Note, *ib.* Berlin Memorandum, 618-19. Follows Lord Beaconsfield's advice, 619. The Bulgarian massacres, *ib.* Independence again defended by Lord Beaconsfield, 626, 656; rejects proposals of Constantinople Conference, 656. War with Russia, 657.
Tyne Mercury on Peel in '41, 210.
Tyrrell, Sir J., votes against Peel, 357. On Lord Beaconsfield's first Budget, 439.

Ultramontanism advocated by Lord J. Manners, 214-16; by G. Smythe, 219.
Union, Repeal of, O'Connell's agitation for, 252.
Urquhart, Mr. D., plagiarised by Lord Beaconsfield, 599-600.
Utrecht, Treaty of, 364.

"Vanity Fair" contrasted with "Coningsby," 230.
Vansittart, Mr., ridiculed in "Coningsby," 232.
"Venetia" published, 197. Analysed, 198-200.
Victor Emmanuel, condemned by Conservative party, 523.
Vienna Congress, 494. Treaty of, 365.
Villiers, Right Hon. C. P., in 1837, 158. Proposes motion on Corn Laws, 184. Gives notice of motion in favour of Free Trade, 449; and on Beaconsfield's pronouncements, 450. Proposes resolutions, 456-7; on Lord Beaconsfield's amendment, 460. Proposes reply to Address, 404. Asks declaration of policy from Derby Ministry, 432.
"Vindication of the English Constitution" published, 114. Egotistic anecdote, 115-16. The Commons an Estate, 116. Attacks Lord Beaconsfield's former friends, 117. Indicts Whig party, 118. Charges it with limiting Peerage, *ib.* The charge unfounded, 118-20. Eulogises George III., 120; and Pitt, *ib.*; and Burke, 121. Describes Tories as the National Party, 120. Lord Beaconsfield portrays himself under Bolingbroke, 120-24. Eulogises Bolingbroke for deserting Tory principles in office, 123. This principle examined, 123-5. Reviewed in *Globe*, 126-7. Its doctrines compared with Lord Beaconsfield's speeches, 205-6. Similarity of ideas in "Coningsby," 231. Doctrines contrasted with Lord Beaconsfield's speeches in 1846, 299.
Virgil, Lord Beaconsfield compares himself to, 85.
"Vivian Grey," first part, published, 15. Extremely successful, 15-16. Second part published, 17. Analysed, 27-42. The hero goes to school, 27-8. Studies politics, 28. Reflections on the means of success, 29-30. Meets and flatters the Marquess of Carabas, 31-4. His reflections on life, 34-5. His tactics at a dinner, 35. Meeting of the Carabas party, 36-7. Speech, *ib.* Interview with a retired statesman, 37. Vivian Grey and Mrs. Felix Lorraine, 37-41. Supplies the key to Lord Beaconsfield's character and career, 39-40. Similarity of passage in, with speech of Lord Beaconsfield, 76. Dreams realised in Lord Beaconsfield's second Premiership, 664.

Wakley, Mr. T., on Lord Beaconsfield's first Budget, 440.
Wales disturbed by Chartists, 182.
Walpole, The Rt. Hon. H. S., resigns office, 524. Advocates proceeding with Resolution and Reform Bill simultaneously, 555.
Walpole, Sir R., chief means of defeating Peerage Bill, 119-20. Censures Lord Beaconsfield for attacking Lord Canning, 515.
Ward, Mr., in 1837, 160.
Warwickshire represented by Mr. Newdegate, 357.
Welbeck, scene of Bentinck's death, 390.
Wellington, Duke of, called to power, 70. Reason for accepting Free Trade, 300. Joined by Canning's friends in Ministry, 328. Dies, 452. Lord Beaconsfield pronounces panegyric on, 452;

which was plagiarised from French Review, 452-6.
"Westminster Elector" accuses Lord Beaconsfield of being a member of a Liberal Club, 88. His charge denied by Lord Beaconsfield, 97. Proves his charge by producing Lord Beaconsfield's letters, 97-9.
Westminster Review severely criticises "The Young Duke," 18. Edited by Col. Thompson, 152. On "Sybil," 245.
Westminster Reform Club, Lord Beaconsfield charged with being a member of, 88. He denies the charge, 97. The charge proved by a Westminster Elector, 97-9; and by Mr. Fraser Rae, 99-100. Foundation of, 100.
"What is He?" published, 67. Advocates coalition of Tories and Radicals, 68.
Whigs disliked by Reformers, 45-6. Opposed by Reformer candidates, 46-7. Abuse of, common among genuine Liberals, 62. Attacked by Lord Beaconsfield, 57, 59, 63, 64. Indicted in "Vindication," 118. Accused of limiting the creation of Peers, *ib.* The charge unfounded, 118-20. Described as an oligarchy, 122. Attacked by Runnymede, 148. Position in 1837, 162. Not true free-traders according to Lord Beaconsfield, 202-4. Confidence of Queen brought forward in favour of, 205. Appealed to by Lord Beaconsfield against Peel, 276-7. Determined to carry Free Trade, 280-81. In new Parliament, 371.
Whiteside, Mr., approves of Lord Beaconsfield's Indian motion, 513.
William IV., death of, 150.
Williams, Rev. Mr., influenced by Tractarianism, 227.
Willis, N. P., describes Lord Beaconsfield, 15-17.
Willoughby, Sir H., opposes Gladstone's doubling of income tax, 483.
Wilson, Mr., proposes increase of malt tax, 485.
Wiltshire represented by Mr. Long, 357.
Winchelser Scholar, Lord Beaconsfield described as a, 192. The statement examined, *ib.*
Winchester, Lord Beaconsfield at a private school in, 8.
Wood, Alderman, member of the Westminster Reform Club, 100.
Wood, Sir Charles (now Lord Halifax), on Lord Beaconsfield's first Budget, 438. Criticises Lord Beaconsfield's Budget, 471. Assailed by Lord Beaconsfield, 472. Attacks on Napoleon, 491.
Wycombe, High, character of, 44. Contested by Lord Beaconsfield and Col. Grey, 44-5. Returns Col. Grey, 55. Again contested, 58-64. Again returns Col. Grey, 64. Addressed by Lord Beaconsfield, 78-9. Again returns Col. Grey, 82. Speech of Lord Beaconsfield at, 82. Claimed by Lord Beaconsfield as his birthplace, 188; as his father's property, *ib.*; and as willing to return him and his nominee, *ib.* Those statements examined, 188-90. Again claimed by Lord Beaconsfield as his place of birth, 414.
Wyndham quoted by Lord Beaconsfield, 61.

Yardley, Mr. W., challenges Lord Beaconsfield, 193.
Yorks, The, vote against Peel, 357.
"Young Duke" published, 17. Its character, 18. Prophecy on Lord Beaconsfield's future, 178. On Canning, 342-3.
"Young England," first appearance in Lord Beaconsfield's speeches, 179. Party formed, 214. Doctrines, 214-15. Advocated by Lord J. Manners, 215-18; and by George Smythe, 219-20. Absurdity of its doctrines, 226. Begat by Tractarianism, *ib.* Adoption of those doctrines intelligible in G. Smythe and Lord J. Manners, 226-7; but not in Lord Beaconsfield, 227-9; yet preached most vigorously by him, 228-9.

Printed by
MORRISON & GIBB LIMITED
Edinburgh

see page 612
" " 387